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Putting “Creativity” on the Map: The Rise of the “Creative City” as a Global Planning Concept since 1980

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Preface

Writing this thesis has definitely been challenging yet rewarding at the same time. Over the past two plus years, the Covid-19 pandemic has prevented international travel and consequently the opportunity to access archives that would have served as key sources for our research. Nevertheless, the attempt here has been to present as thorough an analysis as possible by relying upon secondary literature and online primary sources that were available to us.

"Cities are cauldrons of creativity" – Richard Florida.

Abstract

The twenty-first century is the century of the cities. Over half of the world's population today live in cities. Concomitantly, the "creative city" has become a leading concept in urban planning and city management. But how so? The question then is, how did the popularity of the "creative city" concept come about? When the "creative city" concept first emerged/was introduced around the late 1980s, it was seen as an aspirational concept: a call to encourage open-mindedness, imagination and public participation. Cities, regions, and nations all call themselves "creative". This thesis traces the rise and global proliferation of the "creative city" concept, going back to its first formulations in the late 1980s. The effects and impact of neo-liberalism and globalization only offer a partial explanation to this development. Sure, the information and technological revolution, namely the internet-based "new economy", has created dramatic socio-economic and cultural transformations, resulting in a shift in focus from brawn (physical labor) to brain, where value added is generated by ideas that are turned into innovations and inventions. In this process, cities have been drawn into this reinvigorated globalization, becoming the hubs of wealth creation, increasingly more so than nation-states. This thesis, however, suggests shifting the focus towards the most prominent proselytizers of the concept. The popularity of authors such as Charles Landry and Richard Florida has given a particular emphasis in not only promoting the "creative city" concept, but also within the urban planning discourse itself, as well as the subsequent discussions, debates and criticisms surrounding it. Hence, by engaging critically with these authors, the thesis stresses the point that popular ideas do not simply reflect circumstances of wider trends, but require the agency of historical actors to gain traction.

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Introduction

"Cities have one crucial resource – their people."[1]

Wellington E. Webb, the former mayor of Denver once famously proclaimed: "the 19th century was the century of empires, the 20th century was a century of nation states. The 21st century will be a century of cities."[2] Today, over half of the world's population live in cities – in Europe that rises to over 75 per cent and in the developing world close to 50 per cent, whereas in 1980, this number was just 29 per cent worldwide.[3] The distinction between an urban environment inserted into a predominantly rural world is now a thing of the past, ushering us into an era in which the city – in whatever shape or form it takes – is the most prevalent context for human habitation. Indeed then, the twenty-first century represents the "age of the city". According to Charles Landry, "when the world is changing dramatically, we need to rethink the role of cities and their resources and how urban planning works."[4] Keeping this in mind, the "creative city" describes a new method of strategic urban planning, thus shaping the way how people can think, plan and act "creatively" in the city. It further explores how we can make our cities more livable by harnessing people's imagination and talent. "In its simplest formulation, the main idea is that capitalist development today has moved to a new distinctive phase, in which the driving force of the economy is not simply technological or organizational, but human."[5] Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to explore the trajectory and rise of the "creative city" concept from its origins in the late 1980s onwards to the present; with the principal question being how we can explain its rapid rise. But before we turn our attention towards further understanding the "creative city" concept, it might be useful to say something about the notion of "paradigms" itself.

As used to describe changes in thought, the notion of a "paradigm" derived from Thomas Kuhn's highly influential work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), who used the concept to describe major shifts in theoretical perspective in the history of science. According to Kuhn, "if we look at the history of science, we find that advances in scientific thought have rarely

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[1] Charles Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (London: Earthscan, 2008), p. 2.
[2] Benjamin Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 6.
[3] Maurizio Carta, *Creative City, Dynamics, Innovations, Actions* (Rome: Rubbettino Publishing House, 2007), p. 7.
[4] Landry, *The Creative City*, p. 3.
[5] Alberto Vanolo, "The image of the creative city: Some reflections on urban branding in Turin," *City, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 25 (2008), p. 370.

occurred in a steady, evolutionary manner in response to the gradual accumulation of empirical evidence."[6] Rather, the history of science is marked by long periods in which "a given theoretical perspective or 'paradigm' has prevailed and been accepted by members of a scientific community. During these relatively stable periods, most scientific research is premised upon the prevailing paradigm, and empirical observations are interpreted in terms of it."[7] However, there is often the possibility that some of the empirical evidence does not fit or align with the prevailing theoretical claims. Some scientists would be willing to overlook this evidence on the assumption that one day someone will explain how it fits within the framework of the current "paradigm". However, "truly creative scientists are those who develop a new theoretical framework that succeeds in accounting for the hitherto puzzling evidence as well as the evidence previously explained by the 'old' paradigm."[8] Therefore, when a "new paradigm" succeeds in replacing an "old paradigm", there is a revolution in scientific thought and consequently, the way of perceiving and explaining some aspect of the world is superseded and replaced by a new theoretical perspective entirely. For example, Kuhn sees the change from the Copernican view of seeing the Earth as flat and at the center of the Universe, to the Heliocentric view of seeing it as round and orbiting the Sun, as a profound and revolutionary change in scientific thought – a paradigm shift.[9] For Kuhn then, "paradigm changes" represent fundamental shifts in people's view of the world; hence why he calls "paradigm shifts" as revolutionary, and precisely why they occur infrequently in the history of science. Simply put, any given "paradigm", once established, shapes the whole way a scientific community (and beyond that, the general public) views some aspect of the world, and tends to endure for centuries, not just decades. Hence, we believe there should be some caution in using the notion of "paradigms", and "paradigm shifts", to the changes in the history of urban planning thought, which is why we have opted to use the word "concept" throughout the thesis when referring to the "creative city". At the same time however, it is also important to note that the changes Kuhn was describing was specific to scientific thought; that is, "major changes in the way people have described and explained some aspect of reality as a matter of fact."[10] Urban planning

[6] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions – 50th Anniversary Edition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 45.
[7] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, p. 53.
[8] Alexander Bird, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions and Its Significance: An Essay Review of the Fiftieth Anniversary Edition," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (2012), p. 872.
[9] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, p. 54.
[10] Bird, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions and Its Significance," p. 892.

is not, then strictly speaking, a science (not even – as some still persist in saying – a social science). Rather, it is a form of social action, "directed at shaping the physical environment, and driven in this by certain moral, political, and aesthetic values. In other words, town planning is an 'ethical' and hence political practice, but of course, in seeking to realize certain valued ends, town planning should draw on relevant scientific understanding."[11] Nevertheless, even though we are now aware of the pitfalls associated with using Kuhn's concept of "paradigm shifts", that does not stop us from using it in a looser sense in order to describe significant changes in town planning – the "creative city".

The "creative city" concept at its core is the assumption that "ordinary" people can make the "extraordinary" happen if given the chance. In the "creative city" then, "creativity" can come from any source – from a businessperson, a social worker, a scientist, an engineer or public administrator, so long as the issues are addressed in a "creative" manner. And over time, the economy, the political system and the bureaucracy would all come together to form part of the "creative city" by promoting "creative" urban policies. Curiously, Florida claims that traces of this kind of "creativity" has in fact been present since antiquity (a recurring argument made by other authors/scholars as well, which we will look into later). For instance, "Plato's Republic which envisioned an ideal city was a product of the cultural and intellectual flowering of the earthly city of Athens, as well as a broadside against its politics. Furthermore, the likes of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo were all born in or near the city of Florence."[12] Great thinkers, artists, and entrepreneurs alike cluster and thrive in places which attract other "creative" people, and that provide environments that foster and support "creative" efforts. Cities as a result, have long functioned as key conduits of "creativity".

Since the late 1980s however, "creativity" as a concept of the contemporary city has gained a new impetus. Case in point, according to UNESCO's latest Creative Cities Network list, 246 cities across the globe currently make up their network.[13] Yet, this explosion of the "creative city" concept is not simply symptomatic of the dramatic changes caused by the unprecedented globalization and urbanization witnessed during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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[11] Bird, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions and Its Significance," p. 893.
[12] Patrick Adler and Richard Florida, "Creative Class and the Creative Economy," *Encyclopedia of Creativity* (2020), p. 224.
[13] "Creative Cities Network," https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/ (Accessed 02 April 2021).

Transitions (though they differ from region to region) in the history of societies, cities, and their economies are reflected in how cities develop and how urban planning is conceived. Thus, the city of the future needs to be thought of differently from the city of the past. As Landry suggests, "we cannot solve 21st-century problems with 19th-century mindsets: the dynamics of cities and the world urban system have changed too dramatically."[14] Though in this thesis, we would like to focus on the authors themselves, in particular, Charles Landry and Richard Florida; the key roles they have played and the impact/influence they have had in the worldwide popularity and acceptance of the "creative city" concept within the urban planning discourse across the globe. The notion of a "creative city" emerged as a prominent urban and economic concept thanks largely due to Richard Florida's now seminal work, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). Florida's concept that a strong sense of "creativity" can benefit the standing and health of a city has gained widespread acknowledgment and support since, with many urban thinkers and local governments promoting a "creative city" agenda. The proliferation of the number of "creative city" indexes across the globe, like the one created by UNESCO alone is a testament to accepting the concept of the "creative city", though as we will see, indexing and ranking was also an important mechanism for the dissemination of the concept. For instance, Landry himself created his own "creative city" index in 2008-09 in order to assess cities holistically by focusing on ten domains that indicate "creativity".[15] Likewise, economists Carlos Miguel Correia and José da Silva Costa in their article survey and appraise various "creative city" indexes, where they compare twelve selected indexes of "creativity" and identify their strengths and weaknesses; ranging from the Hong Kong Creativity Index, to the Composite Index of the Creative Economy based upon which they propose a new index.[16] In doing so, they compare the results with Florida's 2011 Global Creativity Index, which only goes onto show the influence authors such as Florida and Landry have had on the field of urban studies, including scholars from different disciplines. And we have yet to even discuss Florida's critics; authors such as Jamie Peck, Stefan Krätke and Allen J. Scott amongst others, who have further contributed to and brought awareness to the discussions and debates surrounding the "creative city" concept.

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[14] Landry, *The Creative City*, p. 4.

[15] Charles Landry, "Creative City Index," https://charleslandry.com/themes/creative-cities-index/ (Accessed 02 April 2021).

[16] Carlos Miguel Correia and José da Silva Costa, "Measuring Creativity in the EU Member States," *Investigaciones Regionales*, No. 30 (2014), p. 8.

With this perspective in mind, the first part of the thesis starts by examining the prevailing post-World War Two urban planning theory and subsequently, the meaning of the "creative city" concept. Then, the origins and evolving trajectory of the "creative city" concept along with importance of the role authors/experts (as referred to above) play in promoting and disseminating it will be discussed. In this part, we draw on proceedings of selected events hosted by early adopters of the "creative city" concept as well as scholarly and journalistic publications that challenged Richard Florida's proposition to make cities attractive to what he called the "creative class". The third, and final part will look at specific "creative city" case studies around the world to not just highlight the global reach and impact of the "creative city" concept, but to also understand how "creativity" manifested itself and its implications in terms of policy. To this end, we focus on Milwaukee, Turin, and Shanghai as three case studies where "creativity" has been referred to in city branding campaigns and local policy initiative. Much of this chapter is based on secondary literature, which we supplement with campaign material published online. Finally, the thesis concludes by reflecting on what next for the "creative city" and the challenges that lie ahead with regards to the perception and continued understanding and implementation of the concept.

Chapter I

Post-war conceptions of urban planning and the "creative city" concept

Some men see things as they are and say, "Why?"
I dream of things that never were and say, "Why not?" – George Bernard Shaw.[17]

As it implies political decisions about infrastructure, housing, transport and other matters of municipal governance, the "creative city" is a planning "paradigm". In this way, it follows previous trends in town planning. To understand how the "creative city" concept gained traction, what conditions furthered its spread and what people facilitated its rise, we need to briefly recall the main trends that dominated town planning in post-war town planning. We need to identify its central ideas, the political constellation and economic conditions that supported it, as well as its consequences. In this way, we can address questions such as: did the "creative city" concept owe its rise to the failure or previous town planning ideals; was it carried by new coalitions of people; did it evolve gradually or break with earlier planning ideals? Before discussing the origins and meaning of the "creative city" concept, it is important that we first examine the prevailing conception of the nature of town (and country) planning as a discipline; that is, the view which most town planners held in the post-war years about the kind of activity they were involved in and how they defined town planning at that time. As Robert Freestone eruditely sums up, "the history of urban planning is a complex and ongoing history of achievement of failure, resilience, and challenge."[18] With so many planning histories – products not just of their time, but also in terms of methodology, theoretical position (or lack of), and their intellectual and political context – no one definitive story can be told. Nevertheless, the attempt here will be to paint an overall (admittedly though a western democratic-oriented) picture, particularly considering the influence European colonial planning models have had "in shaping and impacting present urban structures and development as well as intersecting with the second wave of modernity brought on by globalization and the new economic growth of the twenty-first century, especially in terms of addressing urban livability and sustainability in non-Western parts of the world."[19] For instance, referring to Southeast Asia, Belinda Yuen asserts in her article that even though Southeast Asia

[17] Carta, *Creative City, Dynamics, Innovations, Actions*, p. 8.
[18] Robert Freestone, "Learning from Past Histories," in *Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience*, ed. by Robert Freestone (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 7.
[19] Belinda Yuen, "Urban planning in Southeast Asia: perspective from Singapore," *The Town Planning Review*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (2011), p. 145.

has been influenced by ancient China, India and Muslim empires, from an urban history perspective Southeast Asian countries only began to develop independently of each other after European colonization in the sixteenth century. Motivated by trade and imperialism, Portugal, Netherlands, Spain, Britain, France and the United States at various times have occupied and ruled Southeast Asia with the exception of Thailand. And though experiences vary, in many countries, colonization has led to immigration and population growth, expansion of human settlements and the introduction of Western town planning ideas, modernity and new townscapes, among others. Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) argued that the constitution of knowledge is inseparable from the exercise of power.[20] Similarly, Anthony D. King in his seminal analysis of the cultural productions of capitalism (and spatial transformations) observed that Western town planning has been an integral part of colonial domination, fueling the notion of dependent urbanism.[21] In addition, Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1991) argued that the spread of capitalism globally has resulted in similarities while differences of local culture, history and natural landscape are suppressed. Lefebvre further suggests that the history of space is produced and reproduced in connection with the forces of production (and with the relations of production) in what he terms "spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces."[22]

1.1. Architecture for the masses: Approaches to city planning in the post-war decades

Post the Second World War then, the prevailing view was that except for regional planning controls over industry, town and country planning was concerned with the "physical" environment and was thus most appropriately described as physical planning, as opposed to "social" and "economic" planning. In essence, it was seen as a natural extension of architecture and (to a lesser extent) civil engineering, and hence as an activity was the domain of architects and civil engineers. As Lewis Keeble emphasized on the very first page of his influential textbook on planning, *Principles and Practice of Town and Country Planning* (1952):

> Town and Country Planning might be described as the art and science of ordering the use of land and the character and siting of buildings and communicative routes . . . Planning, in the sense with which we are concerned with it, deals primarily with land, and is not

[20] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 4.
[21] Yuen, "Urban planning in Southeast Asia," p. 148.
[22] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), p. 33.

> economic, social or political planning, though it may greatly assist in the realisation of the aims of these other kinds of planning.[23]

As mentioned earlier, since town planning was viewed as an exercise in planning the physical location, form and layout of land uses and buildings, it was hence regarded as an "extension" of architectural design (or to a lesser extent civil engineering), "in the literal sense of being concerned with the design of whole groups of buildings and spaces – with 'townscape' rather than the design of individual buildings and their immediate sites, and also in the sense that architecture too was seen to be an exercise in the physical design of built forms."[24] As a result, most practicing town planners in the immediate post-war period were architect-planners. For instance, in post-war Britain, three of the most famous planners – Patrick Abercrombie, Frederick Gibberd and Thomas Sharp – were all architects. And as urban historian Nigel Taylor further points out, this situation was reflected in other European countries as well: in the Netherlands, for example, from the end of the First World War to the mid-1930s, the early modernist architect H.P. Berlage was responsible for Amsterdam's southern extension plan, and in the post-war years the famous modern architect Le Corbusier was commissioned by various cities to prepare town planning schemes.[25] For almost twenty years following the Second World War then (in the majority of the western-democratic world at least), town planning theory and practice was dominated by a concept which saw it essentially as an exercise in physical design. Historian Phillip Wagner in fact points out that this was not so different from the Soviet bloc. This was particularly true of institutions devoted to urban planning, since science-based urban reform remained of central concern to liberal democracies, to fascist, authoritarian, and communist regimes, and to the newly created states of Central and Eastern Europe alike. "In a tradition going back to the nineteenth century, these governments used varying methods of science-based urban and regional planning to respond to numerous post-1918 issues including war damage, overcrowding, and congestion."[26] Thus, town planning was at its core a form of architecture; "its only distinctiveness being that it was

[23] Nigel Taylor, *Urban Planning Theory since 1945* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), p. 5.
[24] Taylor, *Urban Planning Theory since 1945*, p. 8.
[25] Taylor, *Urban Planning Theory since 1945*, p. 8.
[26] Phillip Wagner, "Urban Planning and the Politics of Expert Internationalism, 1920s-1940s," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2020), p. 85.

architecture on the larger scale of a whole town, or at least part of a town, as distinct from an individual building."[27]

From the 1960s onwards though, there were two significant changes in town planning that warrant our attention. The first of these was the shift from the urban design tradition to viewing towns as systems of interrelated activities in a constant state of flux. The second change occurred during the 1970s and 1980s and represented a shift in view of the planner's role. In particular, there was a shift from a view of the planner as a technical expert to the view of the planner as a kind of "facilitator", drawing in other people's views and skills to the business of making planning decisions. As we have emphasized previously, planners had earlier viewed and judged towns predominantly in physical terms due to their background in architecture, but gradually, they began to show an increased interest in social life and economic activities. David Harvey, the eminent British urban geographer saw this as a shift towards sociological conception of space from a geographical or morphological conception of space.[28] Essentially, as the town was now seen as something "live" and "functioning", this meant a "process" rather than an "end-state" or "blueprint" approach, i.e., detailed plans in the making of buildings and other structures. And this is what Charles Landry has alluded to with regards to the "creative city" concept as well, which is worth quoting at length here:

> The city of the future needs to be thought of differently from how we considered cities in the past. A city that encourages people to work with their imagination goes well beyond the urban engineering paradigm in city-making. This focuses largely on hard infrastructures such as roads, monotonous housing developments or undistinguished office buildings, even though, like frenzied bees, architects try to create 'iconic' buildings. It requires, instead, a combination of both hard and soft infrastructures.[29]

This "soft" infrastructure then focuses on networking and paying attention to how people can meet and exchange ideas/foster communication with one another. Moreover, it would promote "third places", which are neither home nor work where people can be together. This might be a café for instance or other kinds of gathering places like piazzas and would also be technologically advanced, where people can have access to public wireless zone so that they can work and

[27] Taylor, *Urban Planning Theory since 1945*, p. 159.
[28] David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London: The University of Georgia Press, 1973), p. 196.
[29] Charles Landry, *Advanced Introduction to the Creative City* (Massachusetts: Edward Elgar, 2019), p. 43.

communicate on the go. Urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg characterizes these "third places" as those where one can go to alone at any time of the day and where one can always see or meet people they are acquainted to. What attracts people most to "third places" are other people, as the "third place" is just so much a space unless the right people are there to make it come alive, and they are the regulars.[30] It is the regulars whose mood and manner influence the nature of interaction in addition to their acceptance of newcomers that is essential to the sustained vitality of the "third place". In this process, strong communication links are established within the city, which in turn helps to develop an overall culture of entrepreneurship, whether this is applied to social or economic ends. In other words, "a vibrancy fostered by a local talent pool generates learning processes embedded within a community, and channels of external communication built to reach selected outsiders speed up knowledge and technology transfer."[31] Likewise, another notable input that created awareness for the importance of interaction in cities came from American urbanist and activist Jane Jacobs.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jacobs emphasized that "most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent."[32] Her ideal of tightly-knit neighborhoods was meant as a challenge to large-scale planning that ripped cities apart into functional zones, in terms of progress, but also of improving the material situation of inner-city people. This was indeed diametrically opposite to the ideals of the earlier prevailing "Garden City" movement, founded by English urban planner Ebenezer Howard. Having witnessed first-hand the poor living conditions in late-nineteenth century London, Howard developed a strong distaste for the city and saw it as an affront to nature. Hence, his aim through the "Garden City" was the creation of small self-sufficient towns, encircled with a belt of agriculture. Industry, schools, and housing were all to be planned in preserves and held together in the center by commercial and cultural places. The town and green belt, as a whole, were to be permanently controlled by the public authority under which the town was developed, in order to prevent supposedly "irrational" changes in land use and to do away with temptations to increase its density. American sociologist Nathan Glazer eruditely points out that the "Garden City" was "conceived as an alternative to the city, and as a solution to city problems; this was the foundation of its

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[30] Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1999), p. 33.
[31] Landry, *Advanced Introduction to the Creative City*, p. 44.
[32] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 178.

immense power as a planning idea."[33] Howard initially managed to get two "garden cities" built, Letchworth in 1903 and Welwyn in 1920, and post the Second World War, England, Sweden, and Finland, each built satellite towns (Stevenage in England, Tapiola in Sweden, and Vällingby in Finland) based on "Garden City" principles. Howard's ideas were enthusiastically adopted in America during the 1920s and 1930s, with the suburb of Radburn in New Jersey and the Green Belt towns serving as early examples. And while Howard and his followers thought of themselves as regional planners, urban planner Catherine Bauer, perhaps more aptly, labelled this group as "Decentrists," for the primary result of regional planning, as they saw it, "would be to decentralize great cities, thin them out, and disperse their enterprises and populations into smaller, separated cities or, better yet, towns."[34] Jacobs however referred to the "Garden City" as "nonsense" and viewed Howard's vision as "feudal". She elaborated:

> He (Howard) seems to have thought that members of the industrial working classes would stay nearty in their class, and even at the same job within their class; that agricultural workers would stay in agriculture; that businessmen (the enemy) would hardly exist as a significant force in his Utopia; and that planners could go about their good and lofty work, unhampered by rude nay-saying from the untrained.[35]

For Jacobs, Howard feared and rejected the energetic forces inherent in urbanization combined with industrialization. Therefore, self-isolating streets and long blocks were both socially and economically constricting. Long blocks, in their nature, stifled the potential advantages that cities offer to incubation, experimentation, and to various small or niche enterprises as these depended upon drawing their customers or clients from among much larger cross-section of the passing public. As a result, the "soft creative" infrastructure is a way through which a city creates the right conditions, thus enabling devices in order to fosters innovation through its incentives and regulatory structures and moving beyond the previously prevailing physical, urban-engineering "paradigm".

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[33] Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p. 18.
[34] Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p. 20.
[35] Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p. 189.

1.2. Why being a "creative city" mattered: Setting the scene for the concept's initial advocacy

Swedish economic geographer Åke E. Andersson, a leading student of "creativity" and cities, put it simply: "Creative people need creative cities."[36] Andersson (just like Florida does), goes back all the way to Athens circa 400 BC, and surmises:

> In the course of the past 2500 years, a small number of relatively large cities have functioned as hotbeds of revolutionary creativity. These cities attracted a disproportionate share of migrants with creative inclinations, and they also facilitated the growth of creativity among those already present. Such cities were both used as arenas for presenting findings from elsewhere and as fertile locations for developing new ideas in collaboration with other creative people.[37]

In relation to classical Athens for example, Andersson points towards the construction of path-breaking architectural monuments like the Acropolis, which constituted the starting point for a cumulative "creative" process among Athenian sculptors and painters such as Polygnotus who decorated the edifices of the Acropolis. This combined with the creation of the public square – the *agora*, allowed Athenians to meet one another not only to buy and sell merchandise, but also to discuss philosophical, scientific, and political issues.[38] As a result, "creativity" blossomed in music, mathematics, literature, and theater, with the likes of Plato, Pythagoras, and Sophocles, making lasting contributions to their respective fields. Going even further back in time, Florida points out that "archaeologists and anthropologists have noted evidence of a flowering of artistic and material creativity that occurred roughly 40,000 years ago in Europe, reflected in everything from cave paintings, figurines, and jewelry, to the complex tools that allowed farmers to begin actively transforming nature."[39] Some scientists attribute this leap to advances in cognition and memory, but pioneering studies by anthropologist Robert Boyd and biologist Peter Richerson put communities not genes at the center of this evolutionary watershed. Adler and Florida, referencing their article, 'Culture and the Evolution of Human Cooperation' (2009), argue that the earliest leaps in human development occurred "in early city-like formations, places where populations were growing denser, larger, and more clustered. Those leaps were products of people working

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[36] Åke. E Andersson, "Creative people need creative cities," in *Handbook of Creative Cities*, ed., by David Emanuel Andersson, Åke E. Andersson, and Charlotta Mellander (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), p. 39.
[37] Andersson, "Creative people need creative cities," p. 39.
[38] Andersson, "Creative people need creative cities," p. 39.
[39] Adler and Florida, "Creative Class and the Creative Economy," p. 224.

and thinking together."[40] In addition, their research found a strong correlation between advances in toolmaking and population size. As people gathered into larger groups and came into contact with one another more frequently, knowledge was shared, retained, and advanced more easily. But why should we draw lessons from Athens anno 400 BC in the first place? What requires highlighting here is that proponents of the "creative city" concept (à la Andersson and Florida in this case), deliberately trace the trajectory of "creativity" to ancient times in order to avoid debating the core aim of post-war planning – the importance of (and the challenges associated) with the conceptualizing of space through physical design. Shifting the discussion to "creativity" is thus rhetorical as it enables today's scholars/authors and urban planners to circumvent the need to address this and instead start with a "blank state". Afterall, who would oppose wanting to be a "creative city" if you corroborate your argument with the sheen of Greek ancestry?

The "creative city" concept posits the notion that the capitalist development today has moved to a new, distinctive phase, in which the driving force is not simply technological, organizational, structural, or physical, but human. The "creative city" concept connects "creativity", culture, and the city together in exploring how places navigate the challenges associated with urban transformation. Jim Colman in his article succinctly puts forth that in truth, a city cannot be "creative". If "creativity" is evident it is because some of its citizens are "creative". People are "creative" – not cities.[41] Consequently, as we have discussed earlier, a "creative city" is a city that encourages people to work with their imagination, a city that goes well beyond the post-World War Two urban engineering "paradigm" in city-making. So, what exactly are the features of a "creative city"? There is no definitive answer to this question, evidencing the fluidity of the concept of "creativity". According to Landry, a "creative city" features "hard infrastructures such as roads, housing developments or office buildings, along with soft infrastructures, i.e., paying attention to how people can meet, exchange ideas and network. It shifts focus and encourages physical developments and place-making or urban design that foster communication between people."[42] The "creative city" thus enables a series of connections. Connections between people and their spaces as well as connecting ideas and insight. Australian architect and urban

[40] Robert Boyd and Peter J. Richerson, "Culture and the Evolution of Human Cooperation," *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences*, Vol. 364, No. 1533 (2009), p. 3283.
[41] Jim Colman, "It is people who are creative not cities," *Australian Planner*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2005), p. 23.
[42] Landry, *Advanced Introduction to the Creative City*, p. 7.

designer Rob Adams in his article lists ten points to a "creative city". These include structure, accessibility, variety, animation (in other words, human activity), continuity and change, distinct characters (diversity), equity, good fit with people's intentions, sense, and a sustainable city.[43] It might be useful here to briefly expand on what Adams means when he refers to "good fit with people's intentions". "Fit" here describes the extent to which a physical setting helps people to feel comfortable and safe and allows them to achieve their objectives. Urban amenity relies on respectful and supportive relationships between individual developments, nearby places and the public realm. [44] Essentially then, it is the need for a single space to accommodate a wide array of events rather than one specialized activity – to welcome all and exclude nobody. This in turn can empower people to engage and to act. And according to Landry, "everyone is in principle creative, but not everyone is equally creative, although everyone can be more creative than they are."[45] Richard Florida (to whom we shall return to later) in his seminal work, *The rise of the creative class* (2002) concurs. He adds that "creativity is not the province of a few selected geniuses who can get away with breaking the mold because they possess superhuman talents. It is a capacity inherent to varying degrees in virtually all people."[46] The precondition to be "creative" then is to encourage people to be curious. Curiosity is the starting point because it is the ability to open the human mind and to search for insights, learning, possibilities, and solutions. At its core, it requires an attitude of openness, flexibility, and the ability to think across disciplines and boundaries. On that basis new ideas, processes, technologies, products, and services may be invented that again go beyond the physical (brawn). The essence of "creativity" then is the ability to assess and find solutions for intractable, unexpected, unusual problems or circumstances. And this "creativity" can occur in any field from the social, political, organizational or cultural field to technology and the economy with "the end result of these processes being an innovation in terms of end-product, a service, a technology, a technique and procedure, a process, an implementation mechanism, a problem redefinition, or new professional attitudes."[47] It is important to note however that "creativity" is context-driven. What is "creative" in the nineteenth or twentieth century will be different from what is "creative" in twenty-first century. Case in point being the shift we have

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[43] Rob Adams, "What makes a Creative City?," *Australian Planner*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2005), p. 20.
[44] Adams, "What makes a Creative City?," p. 20.
[45] Landry, *Advanced Introduction to the Creative City*, p. 44.
[46] Florida, *The rise of the creative class*, p. 32.
[47] Landry, *The Creative City*, p. 4.

endeavored to examine from the prevailing (western-democratic oriented) post-World World Two urban planning theory to the emergence of the “creative city” concept. We have seen here that general transitions in the history of societies, cities and their economies are reflected in how cities develop and how urban planning is conceived. The form and priorities of city-making to develop a city are different under say the era of labor-intensive mass production-based industrialization from those of high-technology, that focus on knowledge-based development. “In the former, planning is largely top down and seen, in essence, as urban engineering and the construction of public works, such as roads, railways and ports.”[48] Over time this developed into a bureaucratic, professionalized and centralized planning system that was largely closed. In the latter, it is more participatory, where open systems of planning have materialized that are increasingly more communal. In what Richard Florida dubs as the new “creative age”, he sees the most valuable economic attribute today to be not land or capital, but “creativity” – an endowment that every human being shares in. According to him, for the first time in history, the logic of economic growth requires the fuller development and flourishing of human potential.[49]

The next part of this thesis will aim to explore the influence of authors on the lineages and the evolving trajectory of the “creative city paradigm”, (as both see it as a “paradigm” shift). The popularity of authors such as Charles Landry and Richard Florida and their works is imperative in understanding the rise of the “creative city” concept within the urban planning discourse, in subsequent discussions, debates as well as criticisms surrounding it.

[48] Taylor, *Urban Planning Theory since 1945*, p. 158.
[49] Richard Florida, *The rise of the creative class: And how that’s transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), p. 33.

Chapter II

Humble beginnings and critical headwind: Origins, interpretations, and development of the "creative city" concept

"Nothing is more revealing than movement" – Martha Graham.[50]

In their *Handbook of Creative Cities* (2011), Åke E. Andersson and Charlotta Mellander, claim that the publication of *The Rise of The Creative Class* (2002) by Richard Florida, the "creative city" became the new hot topic among urban policymakers, planners, and economists.[51] Similarly, Alberto Vanolo in his article states right at the outset – the popularity of the works of authors such as Landry and Bianchini (1995) and Florida (2002) has given a particular emphasis to the "creative city."[52] In fact, both Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini have acknowledged that the publication of Florida's work gave the "creative city" movement a dramatic lift. According to Landry, it importantly connected the three areas: "a creative class – a novel idea, the creative economy and what conditions in cities attract the creative class."[53] Bianchini further adds that Florida's work was highly influential and rapidly took the "creative city" debate albeit in a different direction from the "creative city" concept proposed by himself and Landry (to which we shall return to later). The prominence of Richard Florida in the presence of the literature on "creative cities" distracts from the fact that this "paradigm" for urban planning resulted from a larger and older academic discussion. This part of the thesis traces the origins of the "creative city" concept back to the late 1980s and follows its subsequent development. As stated earlier, the concept can be understood in a variety of different ways, ranging from narrower policies for the cultural and "creative" industries at city and regional level, to fully fleshed out regional and urban strategies, aimed at harnessing people's "creativity" as a resource, in policy areas that go well beyond the cultural sector.

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[50] Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), p. 26.
[51] David Emanuel Andersson and Charlotta Mellander, "Analyzing Creative Cities," in *Handbook of Creative Cities* ed. by David Emanuel Andersson, Åke E. Andersson and Charlotta Mellander (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), p. 3.
[52] Vanolo, "The image of the creative city," p. 370.
[53] Charles Landry, "The Creative City: The Story of a Concept," in *Creative City Perspectives*, ed. by Ana Carla Fonseca Reis and Peter Kageyama (São Paulo, 2009), p. 8.

Florida argued that a central factor in urban economic success is a city's ability to attract and nurture talent, technological innovation, openness and tolerance of cultural diversity, unconventional lifestyles, and different sexual preferences.[54] This in turn had an impact on how cities should evolve with an increasing emphasis on the soft factors that make cities work. And since then, the interest in "creative cities" has proliferated across Europe, the Americas, Asia and Australia. Though of course, Richard Florida was not the first scholar to the study the relationship between "creativity" and economic development. Already in 1985 for example, Åke E. Andersson published a book (in Swedish) that claimed that "creativity" represents the future of the metropolis, and that "creative knowledge handlers" will become increasingly important in the emerging post-industrial economy.[55] But since it was published in Swedish, and the corresponding contribution in English was both shorter and much less accessible to non-economists, the sphere of influence of Andersson's theory of the "creative knowledge society" was limited to academic regional economists, i.e. those in Scandinavia, especially in Sweden and Denmark, where his ideas have reached a wider audience. Indeed, it is interesting to note that these ideas made their wary early on in Scandinavia, where one would expect the state providing for housing in view to social needs. The criticism often directed towards Florida is that the "creative city" is the "paradigm" of the neoliberal city, one that has been handed over to consumerism and capital. With that in mind, we would not expect to see an early interest from Scandinavia.

But, before we delve deeper into Florida's concept, its impact, and the subsequent debates and critiques surrounding it, we need to step back in time to consider the origins of the "creative city" concept between the late 1980s and early 1990s and the ways in which it has evolved and been applied since then. The "creative city" concept, as stated earlier, can be understood in a variety of different ways, ranging from narrower policies for the cultural and "creative" industries at city and regional level, to fully fleshed out regional and urban strategies, aimed at harnessing people's "creativity" as a resource, in policy areas that go well beyond the cultural sector. This part of the thesis then attempts to provide historical specificity by detailing how the "creative city" concept evolved in several overlapping research and policy circles. As a result, exploring this

[54] Franco Bianchini, "Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations, and Development of the Creative City Idea," in *Cities and Creativity from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. by Ilja Van Damme, Bert de Munck, and Andrew Miles (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 32.
[55] Andersson and Mellander, "Analyzing Creative Cities," p. 3.

historical context will not only help in understanding the origins of the "creative city" concept, its various interpretations and critiques, but also importantly, in analyzing the roles scholars/authors such as Landry and Florida have played in its development.

2.1. Straight outta Dortmund: Unlikely early adopters of the "creative city" concept

Today, the "creative city" has become somewhat of a buzzword, but back in the late 1980s, when most of the constituent ideas were under development, the key terms being discussed were: culture, the arts, cultural planning, cultural resources, and the cultural industries. The "creative city" concept then as an urban policy idea first came into prominence in Australia in 1988, and developed especially in the UK, Germany and other European countries during the 1990s.[56]

The concept was used for the first time at a conference in Melbourne in September 1988, organized by the Australian Council, the City of Melbourne and the Ministry of Planning and Environment of Victoria. The conference focused on integrating cultural policy with urban planning where the keynote speech was delivered by David Yencken, former Secretary for Planning and Environment in Victoria. In his speech, Yencken argued:

> A creative city must be efficient; it should be concerned with the material well-being of all its citizens, especially the poor and the disadvantaged. But it must be more than that. It should be at the one time an emotionally satisfying city and a city that stimulates creativity among its citizens.[57]

While in the US, one of the first and most prominent thinkers associated with seeing the city as a potential "creative" resource was Robert H. McNulty (at present a Visiting Fellow at the University of Oxford's Institute of Population Ageing). He also serves as president of Partners for Livable Places (now known as Partners for Livable Communities), a non-profit organization he founded in 1975 after a consortium was formed at the encouragement of the US National Endowment for the Arts. On his website, it refers to Partners as an organization "that since its inception, has been at the cutting edge of promoting agendas of livability, quality of life and the civic structures to support them, with a network of over 1000 organizations; ranging from the World Wildlife Fund

[56] Bianchini, "Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations, and Development of the Creative City Idea," p. 24.
[57] Bianchini, "Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations, and Development of the Creative City Idea," p. 24.

to the Urban Land Institute."[58] The core concepts used by Partners at that time were the twin ideas of cultural planning and cultural resources, not yet the "creative city". Scholars likes Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini collaborated with McNulty in their shared commitment to valuing the contribution of cultural resources not only in affecting cultural policy, but also in other areas of public policy, such as in the planning of urban resources including design, architecture, parks, the natural environment, animation, with a particular emphasis on arts activities within that and tourism. For Bianchini, "effective cultural planning involves all the arts, the art of urban design, the art of winning community support, the art of transportation planning and mastering the dynamics of community development", to which he added "the art of forming partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors and ensuring the fair distribution of economic, social and cultural resources."[59] Bianchini further elaborated on the term cultural resources by stating that they are embodied in peoples' "creativity", skills and talents. By the way of illustrating this, he drew a line of tradition back to the intricate skills of violin makers in Cremona in Italy, the wood carvers of the Kraków region or the makers of ice sculptures in Northern Finland. Urban cultural resources include the historical, industrial and artistic heritage representing assets including architecture, urban landscapes or landmarks.[60] Essentially then, cultural resources represent the raw materials of the city and its value base; and "creativity" is the method of exploiting these raw materials and helping them grow. Hence, an appreciation of culture could shape and inform the technicalities of urban planning and development – "a culturally informed perspective should condition how planning as well as economic development or social affairs should be addressed."[61] Intriguingly, Bianchini like Florida and Andersson (as we saw in the first chapter), harks back to several hundred year old traditions in order substantiate his argument. The implication here is that if cities were already showing signs of unearthing their "creative" potential from the medieval period, then so could cities of today. Though curiously and perhaps consciously, neither Bianchini nor Andersson or Florida delve into exploring the challenges that modern

[58] "People – Robert (Bob) McNulty," https://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/people/view/410 (Accessed, 01 September 2021).
[59] Franco Bianchini, "Remaking European cities: the role of cultural policies," in *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience*, ed. by Franco Bianchini and Michael Parkinson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 3.
[60] Bianchini, "Remaking European cities," p. 8.
[61] Bianchini, "Remaking European cities," p. 8.

developments would present to cities, namely the unprecedented increase in globalization and urbanization.

According to Bianchini, cultural resources reflect where a place is, why it is like it is and where its potential might lead it. This focus draws attention to the distinctive, the unique and the special in any place. And so, from the late 1980s onwards, this started a significant array of economic impact studies of the arts, hitherto creating a link between the arts and the city. Conferences like "Arts and the Changing City: An Agenda for Urban Regeneration" in 1988, brought this point home. The continuing underlying theme from then on was that arts and cultural activities are "creative" and the "creativity" of artists contributes to the vitality of cities making them more interesting and desirable.[62] Over time, Partners launched three programs: Cities in Transition, The New Civics, and Celebrate the American City during the early 1990s, which continued to broaden and explore the meaning and definition of livability and quality of life. This was capped off by launching the Creative City program in 2001, in alignment with Partners' core belief that social equity and human potential are the most important elements of a livable community understandably.[63]

Shifting our attention to Europe, from the first half of the 1990s onwards, the "creative city" concept was further developed primarily by independent research organizations such as Comedia, founded in 1978 by Charles Landry and STADTart, a Dortmund-based cultural policy consultancy run by Ralf Ebert and Friedrich Gnad (both urban planners), working in collaboration with Klaus Kunzmann, professor at the Institute of Spatial Planning at the University of Dortmund.[64] Looking back to the early days of the "creative city" concept, Landry stressed that its genesis lay in Comedia's practical consulting work and not in urban or broader academic theory. In an interview with Franco Bianchini in 2014, Landry claimed that "he saw himself as an activist, as a social entrepreneur, 'as an actor' in the world, wanting to change things."[65] It is important to stress here however that while Landry suggests that he arrived at the "creative city" solution by way of engaging with practical challenges of urban planning, he did not act in an intellectual void. Nevertheless, on a more academic and theoretical level, the Comedia group was influenced by the

[62] Landry, *Advanced Introduction to the Creative City*, p. 47.
[63] Landry, *Advanced Introduction to the Creative City*, p. 47.
[64] Landry, *Advanced Introduction to the Creative City*, p. 48.
[65] Bianchini, "Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations, and Development of the Creative City Idea," p. 24.

aforementioned Åke E. Andersson on "creativity" and economic development in a regional context,[66] and by the work of another Swedish researcher Gunnar Törnqvist, who developed the notion of the "creative milieu". This had four key features: information transmitted among people; knowledge (based partly on the storage of the information); competence in certain relevant activities; and "creativity" (the creation of something new as an outcome of the former three activities).[67] Likewise, the work of STADTart and Kunzmann on the urban "creative economy" in Germany was also a significant influence on the "creative city" movement. Kunzmann and STADTart studied the shift from more technologically advanced manufacturing and services in areas such as the Ruhr, as well as the impact of cultural and environmental industries on urban restructuring.[68] Dortmund, STADTart's homebase, and Glasgow were in fact both industrial powerhouses historically. In Glasgow, industrialization was based on effective transport routes along with the discovery of coal beds that gave rise to the development of the iron and steel industry as well as on heavy engineering and its well-known shipbuilding industry. Similarly, Dortmund became a center of steel plants, coal mines, and the brewing industry, growing from a country town to a large city. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, both cities faced long-standing deindustrialization, economic and physical malaise, and population loss, thus illustrating that deindustrialization provided ideal conditions to propose "creative city" solutions at the local level.[69] In other words, it was not just the hotspots of art and culture that heralded the "creative city" concept, but declining councils of industrial cities that embraced it early on.

In May 1994, Comedia and STADTart, with support from the Anglo-German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society and from Glasgow City Council organized the seminar *Creative City. British and German Responses to Urban Change*, which was held in Glasgow in May of that year. The seminar was based on case studies of five urban areas in Germany (Cologne, Dresden, Unna, Essen, and Karlsruhe) and five in Britain (Bristol, Glasgow, Huddersfield, Leicester and Milton Keynes) to explore urban "creativity". Some of the questions discussed during the seminar

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[66] Åke E. Andersson and David F. Batten, "Creative nodes, logistical networks, and the future of the Metropolis," *Transportation*, Vol. 14, (1987), p. 283.

[67] Gunnar Törnqvist, "Creativity and the renewal of regional life," in *Creativity and Context: A seminar report, Lund studies in Geography*, ed. by Anne Buttimer, No. 50 (Lund, 1983), p. 94.

[68] Klaus Kunzmann, "Culture, Creativity, and Spatial Planning," *Town Planning Review*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (2004), p. 386.

[69] Ralf Richter, "Industrial Heritage in Urban Imaginaries and City Images," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2017), p. 66.

were: What urges urban actors to initiate, develop and implement "creative" policies? Are some cities more "creative" than others, and, if yes, why? Is there something that could be called a "creative city?"[70] Perhaps rather than highlighting the diversity in experiences, these German and British city case studies were selected precisely because all of them were former centers of heavy industries: coal, steel, shipyards. What united them then was not simply their industrial-character, but also that one would not necessarily expect a flourishing art and/or cultural scene there. As a result, each case study was provided with a similar set of questions in order to establish "what its kind of creativity was, where it had come from, how its momentum had been maintained, what organizational structures it required and weather it had made a difference to the city, economically, socially, or culturally."[71]

The *Creative City* seminar thus was key (which is why we have endeavored to chronicle it at length here), as the work of Comedia and STADTart produced a series of influential works by Landry that solidified his position at the forefront of the "creative city" concept. First came the short book, *The Creative City* (1995) by Landry and Franco Bianchini. Written as a handbook for policy makers, it contains a section titled "How to become a creative city" with suggestions on how to obstacles to "creativity" could be removed and a "creative milieu" built.[72] The section, though slightly convoluted, offers a stimulating discussion of factors including handling capacity, valuing the contribution of immigrants, the use of catalyst events and processes, developing "creative" spaces and balancing cosmopolitism and localism. This is followed by examples of "creative" projects and policies, drawn from Europe, North America, and Australia, which amongst others, also included previously mentioned hotspots of deindustrialization such as, Cologne, Glasgow, Birmingham, and Leicester. More importantly, the book argues that "creative city" strategies have relevance that go well beyond the field of cultural policy in education, transport, ecology, housing, health and many other policy areas.[73] Thus rendering the "creative city" concept as a holistic approach to urban planning.

The Anglo-German Foundation project then led in 1996 to the publication of *The Creative City in Britain and Germany*, also written by Landry, which reviewed a range of factors

[70] Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, p. 79.
[71] Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, p. 80.
[72] Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini, *The Creative City* (London: Demos, 1995), p. 25.
[73] Landry and Bianchini, *The Creative City*, p. 28.

influencing the possible development of "creative" urban strategies. These included the quality of a city's research, information and educational infrastructures, the identification of "a crisis challenge to be solved", and the ability of urban policy makers to break the rules, recognize and approve "creative" ideas, among others. Most "obstacles" (towards "creativity" that is) are supposedly set by rigid organizational and bureaucratic frameworks, whereby city governments regulate economic and social life through controls such as planning permissions, licenses, traffic restrictions etc. Hence, these rules, according to Landry, are essentially about containment whilst "creativity" on the other hand, is about expanding possibilities, and "breaking away" from the shackles of this so-called organizational and bureaucratic rigidity.[74] This coupled with Landry's far longer book titled *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* in 2000 (referred to earlier), further popularized and brought the "creative city" concept into the mainstream urban planning discourse. The aim of Landry's book can best be summarized in one sentence: "when the world is changing dramatically, we need to rethink the role of cities and their resources and how urban planning works."[75] Once again, it is worth noting Landry's sense of urgency here. The call to implement untested ideas chimes in with his earlier call to "break the rules" in order to legitimize making drastic changes from the old course. By looking at examples from around the world, Landry described a new urban world evolving based on different principles from those that applied in industrial cities. And as we have mentioned previously, it contrasted the "urban engineering paradigm" of city development focused on hardware with "creative city making"; emphasizing how understanding the software of the city should shape how we build it. Consequently, both these publications broadened the "creative city" concept away from its more exclusive artistic and "creative economy" focus. They discussed issues like the organizational dynamics to foster "creativity", what a "creative milieu" is, how you encourage it, and the role of history and tradition in "creativity".

Meanwhile, the "creative city" movement continued to gain momentum through the organization of conferences (all again involving Landry and Comedia in a central role) in Helsinki in 1996, in Amsterdam in 1998 and in Huddersfield in 2000. The Huddersfield conference, titled *Creative City. Why Cities Must Innovate to Survive*, is interesting, as though it was held almost six

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[74] Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, p. 114.
[75] Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, p. 3.

years after the Glasgow event in 1994, it still displayed a lot of continuity with the existing themes surrounding the "creative city" debate. Unlike the Glasgow event however, the Huddersfield conference was not based on the discussion of in-depth city case studies. Instead, it focused more on "good practice", with contributions from organizations with a vested interest in public policy, including international ones, namely the OECD, the World Bank, and the European Commission. In addition, the Huddersfield conference had more of "millennial" tone than previous events in the emerging "creative city" movement and asked questions such as: "What are the challenges faced by our cities as we enter the Third Millennium, and how can we be more creative in meeting them?"[76] There was, not surprisingly, a greater emphasis on the digital economy than in 1994, with a session titled "New Technology and the City". All the delegates to the conference received a copy of Landry's, *The Creative City. A Toolkit of Urban Innovators* (2000). According to Landry, the book dealt in greater depth with the topics covered by his 1995 book, arguing that the 1995 book was more about cultural resources, while the 2000 book focused on the city as a dynamic organism i.e., it is "living" and not a "machine". Landry suggests that a "machine mindset" comes up with mechanical solutions, whereas one based on biology is more likely to come up with "creative", self-sustaining ideas for a city. It represents a "paradigm shift" – "a shift in focus to health, to the well-being of people and to the lived experience of cities rather than infrastructure, buildings and place. This biological image has far greater resonance, interpretative power and problem-solving capacity."[77] Furthermore, the image of the city as a "machine" reflects "a closed system" with controlled and measurable causes and effects with little room for humans, while the city as a body metaphor offers a new language for urban discussion. For instance, "the bones might correspond to the topography; the arteries and sinews to roads, rail and paths; the intestines to water services; the nervous system to communication and electricity, and so on."[78] It highlights the concept of a variable and adaptable state of health that is analogous to the nature of cities because historically, cities grew organically, meeting needs and supplying needs for others, with the ability to adapt and self-regulate as and when necessity presented itself.

[76] Bianchini, "Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations, and Development of the Creative City Idea," p. 28.
[77] Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, p. 58.
[78] Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, p. 59.

2.2. "Creative class" struggle: The "creative city" concept and its discontents

Paul Chatterton, professor of Urban Futures at the University of Leeds, offers an important and insightful critique of the Huddersfield conference and of Landry's 2000 book. Chatterton points out that the "toolkit" approach directs people to opportunistic rather than strategic thinking which can overlook or marginalize more structural problems faced by urban areas such as their place in the uneven flow of capital around the globe, lack of democratic accountability and an unsustainable growth of ecological footprints.[79] Hence, the "creative city" according to Chatterton, becomes "little more than a rhetorical device which can placate the hearts and minds of local councilors and politicians that they are actually doing something whilst doing hardly any- thing at all."[80] Chatterton further highlights the danger that "creative city" policies and rhetoric could be used by local elites as a means to sanitize the city; where they might promote a more corporate urban environment, in turn neglecting the stark social inequalities that characterize life for the everyday low-income urban dwellers. Chatterton's critique was directed at Landry, but may well have pertained the work of Richard Florida, who became the most famous proselytizer of the "creative city" concept, while changing some of its content.

"If you are a scientist or engineer, an architect or designer, a writer, artist or musician, or if you use your creativity as a key factor in your work in business, education, health care, law or some other profession, you are a member of the creative class."[81] Opening the preface of his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) with the above statement, Florida goes on state:

> As with other classes, the defining basis of this new class is economic. Just as the feudal aristocracy derived its power and identity from its hereditary control of land and people, and the bourgeoisie from its members' roles as merchants and factory owners, the Creative Class derives its identity from its members' roles as purveyors of creativity. Because creativity is the driving force of economic growth, in terms of influence the Creative Class has become the dominant class in society.[82]

Edward L. Glaeser, professor of Economics at Harvard University, in his 2004 review described Florida's work as an international bestseller: "it has become the hot topic among urban policy

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[79] Paul Chatterton, "Will the real creative city please stand up?," *City*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2000), p. 392.
[80] Chatterton, "Will the real creative city please stand up?," p. 392.
[81] Florida, *The rise of the creative class*, xxvii.
[82] Florida, *The rise of the creative class*, xxvii.

makers. Indeed, there is little question that Florida's book has become the most popular book on regional economics over the past decade."[83] And ever since its publication, Florida's popularity has soared. The book's thesis – that the economic success of a city is determined by the "creative class" has proved to be hugely influential on civil leaders around the world. Former governor of Michigan, Jennifer M. Granholm, in September 2003, put on a pair of sunglasses and boasted that, thanks to Florida's ideas, Detroit, Dearborn, and Grand Rapids would soon be "so cool you'll have to wear shades."[84] She further sent a letter to the mayors of 254 communities around Michigan encouraging them to form local "cool cities" commissions, asking those commissions to brainstorm what makes their communities cool and what needs to be done to improve them. "Creating 'cool cities' is more than a catchphrase. It is an initiative that is imperative for us to undertake to grow our state's economy and to keep our young, educated workers here," Granholm said. "The future economic success of our state is directly tied to our ability to attract and retain exciting new jobs and young workers who are hard wired into the knowledge-based economy."[85] No prizes for guessing then, it was Florida who coined the concept of "cool cities" as well. John Hickenlooper, the former mayor of Denver, also in the fall of 2003 announced that he had bought copies of Florida's book for his staff, inspired by his reading, engaged an $80,000-a-year public-relations expert to "rebrand" the city as a more creative metropolis.[86] An anecdote from Hickenlooper's autobiography, *The Opposite of Woe: My Life in Beer and Politics* (2016), is particularly telling and thus warrants some attention here. In 2004, Hickenlooper was steadfast in his drive to acquire the archives of the late American artist Clyfford Still. Over the years, several cities had tried and failed to acquire the collection, including Chicago, New York, Atlanta, Baltimore, among others, to which, Michael Bennet, chief of staff to Hickenlooper at that time quipped "And?" Hickenlooper responded by saying, he wanted to try to get it for Denver.
Bennet said:

> You've got to be kidding me. We've got all of this work to do and you're going to go off to Maryland and try to get some artist's widow to his paintings to Denver? We don't have

[83] Edward L. Glaeser, "Book Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*," 2004, https://scholar.harvard.edu/glaeser/publications/book-review-richard-floridas-rise-creative-class (Accessed 01 September 2021).
[84] Christopher Shea, "The road to riches?," http://www.christopher-shea.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/THE-ROAD-TO-RICHES.pdf (2004).
[85] "Governor Granholm Listens to Cool Ideas to Create Michigan Cool Cities," 20 November 2003, https://www.michigan.gov/formergovernors/0,4584,7-212-96477_57648_21974-80727--,00.html (Accessed 01 September 2021).
[86] Shea, "The road to riches?"

> the money in the budget as it is. If you get the artwork, where exactly are you planning on putting it all? We can't build a museum.[87]

Hickenlooper told Bennet not to worry about it, and recounts:

> We had to try… This was an opportunity to perhaps land one of the major developments for Denver that I had talked about in my campaign. Art and culture were essential to the city… I had the ideas of Richard Florida in my head. Richard had just written *The Rise of the Creative Class* and I agreed with his findings that the Creative Class, which includes young coders and entrepreneurs, along with artists and writers and musicians, would be attracted to cities that embraced music and culture. And when these young hipster innovators came to town, they brought new ideas and the possibility of new companies and new jobs with them.[88]

In August 2004, after months of discussions, Hickenlooper and the City's Office of Cultural Affairs announced that Denver had been chosen to receive the much sought-after 2,000+ piece private collection of Still's works,[89] with the Clyfford Still Museum subsequently opening in November 2011. Outside the US, in a speech to fellow graduates at Harvard University in July 2004, Lee Hsien Loong, the then Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore (soon to be promoted as Prime Minister in August of that year), explained that the country was at a "major transition point". As an example of how the government intended to open up, Lee signaled a relaxation of restrictions on busking and bungee jumping… along with a more "liberal" attitude towards homosexuality – but only after researchers found that cities with high concentrations of gay residents tend also to be centers of innovation.[90] Hence, a strikingly large of number of cities (as we will see later) have bought into Florida's "creative" vision. Perhaps what is more fascinating is the fact that Florida's theory has struck such a chord amongst urban elites and world leaders alike despite it receiving criticism from several different quarters.

Franco Bianchini stated that the publication of Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* in 2002 though highly influential, rapidly took the "creative city" debate in a different direction. He opined, "the creative city idea generated by Landry, myself, and our colleagues to some extent was

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[87] John Hickenlooper with Maximillian Potter, *The Opposite of Woe: My Life in Beer and Politics* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), p. 245.
[88] Hickenlooper, *The Opposite of Woe*, p. 245.
[89] "The Clifford Still Art Collection is Bequeathed to the City of Denver," https://clyffordstillmuseum.org/blog/press-release-clyfford-stills-art-collection-bequeathed-to-denver/ (Accessed 01 September 2021).
[90] "The Son Rises," *The Economist*, 22 July 2004, https://www.economist.com/asia/2004/07/22/the-son-rises (Accessed 01 September 2021).

merged in public understanding with Florida's rather different conception."[91] Here, the words of Jonathan Vickery, associate professor at the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at The University of Warwick, are worth quoting in length in this aspect. He critically observes:

> Looking across Europe, it seems that the original Creative City vision of Landry, et al. with its emphasis on arts and culture, has been almost framed by economic innovation and its requisite skilled labour. The Creative City in many places has become a business project, not a framework for total urban policy transformation. It has scaled down its expectations, and no longer demands that urban policy develop a creative imagination – and do so through participation and liberalisation of the public realm… Richard Florida's Creative Class thesis has proved itself appealing to city politicians and managers all over the world. 'The 'thesis' can be implemented as strategy without unsettling too many ruling assumptions on the role of cities in the global economic order... It allows the onus for 'creative' activity to be transferred to the professional 'class' that are (yet) to be imported into the city. In fact, this 'imported' class always seems more promising than the 'indigenous' creative population![92]

To this, Bianchini further adds that in many ways, Florida's conception was antithetic to the grassroots-oriented concept of *The Creative City* (1995) book written by himself and Landry. In the book, they describe "creative thinking" as a way of getting rid of rigid preconceptions and of opening yourselves to complex phenomena which cannot always be dealt with in a strictly logical manner. It is also a way of discovering previously unseen possibilities. "Everybody is potentially creative, but organisational structures, habits of mind and working practices can squeeze creativity out… Just as a carpenter can't build a table with only a hammer, so we need a richer and more refined mental tool kit to identify and address today's problems."[93] Florida, however, argues that the "creativity" of some people with special talent is more important than the "creativity" of "ordinary" citizens as a strategic resource of urban policy. As a result, the "creative city" concept became increasingly elitist and less and less participatory due to the enormous success and influence of Florida's book during the 2000s, argues Bianchini.[94] Moreover, the more reductive and elitist interpretation of the "creative city" concept developed by Florida also influenced the creation of the aforementioned UNESCO's Creative Cities Network in 2004. In a 2014 interview with Bianchini, Landry claimed that he had played no part in the setting up of the UNESCO

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[91] Bianchini, "Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations, and Development of the Creative City Idea," p. 28.
[92] Jonathan Vickery, "After the Creative City?," *Dortmund: European Centre for Creative Economy* (2012), p. 8.
[93] Landry and Bianchini, *The Creative City*, p. 17.
[94] Bianchini, "Reflections on the Origins, Interpretations, and Development of the Creative City Idea," p. 28.

network, adding that despite the success of the Huddersfield conference of May 2000, he was not asked to develop any "creative city" strategies either.

In the same vein, Florida has attracted much criticism for his relative neglect of issues such as intra-urban inequality and working poverty. Jamie Peck, currently professor at the Department of Geography at The University of British Columbia, in his influential article, 'Struggling with the Creative Class' (2005), observed that the overall tone of Florida's book "is unequivocally celebratory, the possibility that there might be serious downsides to unrestrained workforce and lifestyle flexibilization strategies warranting no more than a passing – if moralizing – mention."[95] According to Peck, Florida's work further glorifies and favors the "class of creatives", whilst paying practically no attention to the divisions of labor within which such employment practices are embedded. Florida's urban policy recommendations, particularly the promotion of modern bohemian style urban cultural amenities, then are oriented towards the urban lifestyle needs of affluent, formally highly qualified service-sector professionals. Thus, this new fashionable urban growth ideology of the "creative class city" is "characterized by an ignorance of urban social polarization, which is a prerequisite for the gentrifiers' lifestyle and, at the same time, is reinforced by internal urban upgrading processes."[96] For Peck, Florida rather evasively posits that "everyone" is – at least potentially – "creative" and that "tapping and stoking the creative furnace inside every human being is the great challenge of our time."[97] What is disturbing for him however is that "only" one third of America's workforce is employed in the "creative" sector of the economy, i.e. those working in science, engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and the entertainment industry, whilst the remaining two-thirds are not. If they did, then everyone could benefit from the fruits of this potential "creative Eden". But this, in effect, would mean that there are no enduring class divisions hitherto leaving unanswered the question of who will sweep the streets or launder the shirts in this "creative Eden". Essentially then, what Florida is proposing is that the working and service classes need to independently find a way to pull themselves up into the "creative economy". So technically, while all people are "creative", some are more "creative" than others, and there are some that simply "don't get it".[98]

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[95] Jamie Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," *International Journal of Urban and Economic Research*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (2005), p. 756.
[96] Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," p. 764.
[97] Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 4.
[98] Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," p. 757.

Other scholars share Peck's skepticism. German economist and social geographer Stefan Krätke adds that Florida's conception of the "creative class" in and of itself is a questionable grouping that needs to be reimagined since regional economic development is dependent on the performance of all working people, not just particular groups from "creative" occupations. He rejects the idea that the "creativity" of cities is simply dependent on the presence of a homogeneous "creative class" and emphasizes that 'the specific contribution of cities to "creativity" is the integration of diversity in the framework of a densely populated urban territory. Large cities offer the framework for a productive interaction of diverse milieus, and in exactly this sense they function as "cauldrons of creativity".[99] Moreover, scholars such as Roberta Comunian from the Department of Culture, Media, and Creative Industries at King's College London and Ann Markusen from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota both agree with Krätke. Comunian argues that that the limitation to Florida's theory concerns its top-down developing assets for attraction and growth. It forces the idea that a "creative city" needs to offer the best "qualities of place" i.e., specific local assets such as cultural amenities, café culture, a "cool scene" of clubs, pubs, and restaurants, as well as particular socio-cultural qualities – cultural diversity, "openness and tolerance" and a provision for high technology, but it does not explain how "creative class" interacts with these types of assets, or what competitive advantages they provide.[100] Markusen, meanwhile suggests that many policy actions suggested by the "creative class" theory are geared towards a building a façade that gives the "creative class" the impression of living in an attractive cosmopolitan city. However, the "creative class" merges together professions which have very different approaches to life and culture. "It is hard to prove that the high-skilled knowledge workers of the new media sector are going to be interested in visiting an art gallery or taking part in an ethnic festival for instance."[101]

There is no shortage of academic critique that challenges the assumption that a concentration of finance and real estate business occupations, for example, in a particular city might cause a corresponding concentration of scientifically and technologically "creative" workers

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[99] Stefan Krätke, "Creative Cities and the Rise of the Dealer Class: A Critique of Richard Florida's Approach to Urban Theory," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2010), p. 842.
[100] Roberta Comunian, "Rethinking the Creative City: The Role of Complexity, Networks and Interactions in the Urban Creative Economy," *Urban Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (2011), p. 1159.
[101] Ann Markusen, "Urban development and the politics of the creative class: evidence from a study of artists," *Environment and Planning*, Vol. 28 (2006), p. 1923.

in that city. Allen J. Scott, former professor of Geography and Public Affairs and UCLA in his article eruditely states that as an empirical proof of the theory of the "creative class", Florida points to a significant correlation between regional concentrations of his "creative class" aggregate and regional growth in high-technology sectors. However, the objection to this is that a statistical correlation does not necessarily represent a causal relationship. Secondly, in the case of a regional concentration, Florida's "creative class" aggregate represents nothing more than a co-location of quite heterogeneous social and functional groups. Co-location does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship of interdependence between the locational preferences and choices of occupational groups that are co-located in particular urban regions.[102] "Creativity", as Scott summarizes, "is not something that can be simply imported into the city on the backs of peripatetic computer hackers, skateboarders, gays, and assorted bohemians but must be organically developed through the complex interweaving of relations of production, work, and social life in specific urban contexts."[103]

Over the years, Florida has responded to his critics in a number of ways. Some, he has dismissed as "squelchers (who) divert human creative energy by posing roadblocks, acting as gatekeepers, and saying 'no' to new ideas' regardless of their merit."[104] Then in 2012, in response to writer Frank Bures article 'The Fall of the Creative Class', Florida in his defense claimed that in a series of careful and detailed studies, some of which were published under the auspices of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, economists Jaison Abel of the Federal Reserve Bank, Todd Gabe from the University of Maine, and Gerald Marlet and Clemens van Woerkens from the Utrecht School of Economics, all found that the "creative class" is a distinct measure from educationally based human capital, and that the "creative class" adds considerable economic value on its own.[105] As for the argument that "creativity" and inequality may be mutually dependent, in an illuminating interview with The Guardian in 2017, Florida launched an impassioned tirade:

> Everything is gentrification now!... "Kids come to my office in tears. They say: 'I took this class in urban geography and I want to make my city better, but they say everything I want

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[102] Allen J. Scott, "Creative Cities: Conceptual Issues and Policy Questions," *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2006), p. 11.
[103] Scott, "Creative Cities: Conceptual Issues and Policy Questions," p. 16.
[104] Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class*, p. 21.
[105] Richard Florida, "What Critics Get Wrong About The Creative Class and Economic Development," 2012, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-07-03/what-critics-get-wrong-about-the-creative-class-and-economic-development (Accessed 07 September 2021).

> to do is gentrification. A better school is gentrification, empowering artists is gentrification, working to improve the condition of parks is gentrification. What can I do? Just let it go all to shit?' I think this academic urbanism is so dangerous, because it disempowers people. It is so removed from the reality of everyday life." … I'm certainly not the architect of gentrification. I wish I had that much power.[106]

Asked in the interview if he regretted promoting any of the principles he has championed for so long, Florida replied "I'm not sorry... I will not apologise. I do not regret anything."[107]

We began this chapter with the proposition that there is a longer history to the rise of the "creative city" concept that requires us to go back before Florida. By tracing its trajectory from the late 1980s, we witness that Andersson's initial works along with Landry's involvement with organizations such as Comedia and STADTart laid the foundations for the "creative city" concept where interestingly, it was deindustrializing cities that were among the keenest and earliest adopters of the concept. Then, with Landry and Bianchini's later works, the evolution of the concept synergized with Florida's ideas, where the "creative city" developed into a more exclusive place, a place to be inhabited by the "creative class", and thus representing a breach with earlier understandings of the concept. Consequently, as we have seen through this chapter, the influence of authors such as Landry, and in particular, Florida is undeniable in explaining the proliferation of the "creative city" concept across the globe. *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) has become a bestseller, a popular manual of contemporary economic development thinking, having a profound impact in the field of urban planning theory and historiography. Florida's notoriety and celebrity academic status is reflected not just through his publications, conference tours, corporate speaking engagements and private consultancy work, but also in terms of how much he continues to get referenced, analyzed, and critiqued by fellow scholars/authors from varied academic disciplines in their own research, and civic leaders alike. Other contributing factors include the mobilization of "creativity" as a positive apple-pie phenomenon, its ostensibly cheap and easy implementation, as well as an absence of alternative innovative urban policies. The end result is a clear and consistent message to policy makers that "cities with thriving arts and cultural climates and openness to diversity of all sorts also enjoy higher rates of innovation and high-wage economic

[106] Oliver Wainright, "Everything is gentrification now: but Richard Florida isn't sorry," 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/oct/26/gentrification-richard-florida-interview-creative-class-new-urban-crisis (Accessed 07 September 2021).
[107] Wainright, "Everything is gentrification now: but Richard Florida isn't sorry."

growth."[108] But to what extent does this hold true? How then does the "creative city" concept translate into concrete urban policies and to what effect? The chapter that follows will discuss these questions with respect to specific case studies that show diversity in terms of geographic location and experience.

[108] Justin O'Connor and Lily Kong, *Creative Economies, Creative Cities: Asian-European Perspectives* (New York: Springer, 2009), p. 2.

Chapter III

Live, Work, Play: The translation of "creative city" concepts into local policies around the world

"Be hip and they will come."[109]

In January 2004, the Badger Institute, formerly known as the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, published a report co-written by George Lightbourn, former Secretary of Administration for the State of Wisconsin and Stephen J. Agostini, the former Budget Director for the City of Milwaukee. "More like Detroit, less like Minneapolis," was how Lightbourn and Agostini then cautioned about the economic future of the city of Milwaukee.[110] The findings of the report were widely reported and discussed that led to a sustained civic soul-searching regarding the city's near thirty-year decline and what could be done to reverse it. The media's attention, however, had little to do with the problems highlighted in the report, namely declining income levels, increasing inequality, and population losses. Rather, the report's prominence stemmed from the "novel" solution it proposed: attracting more members from the "creative class". And in order to do so, the report encouraged municipal leaders to break away from its past image as an industrial/manufacturing hub, urging them instead to do whatever it takes to make the city more "appealing" to young professionals, including "the construction of a downtown music district, new mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, substantial increases in downtown housing, along with more effective marketing initiatives to highlight the region's 'coolness' factors and economic successes."[111] As would be the case then, Richard Florida's ideas struck a chord and proved to be hugely seductive to leaders in Milwaukee's growth trajectory. But how were his ideas assimilated and subsequently implemented into the infrastructure of Milwaukee's urban promotion?

The following chapter is going to take a closer look at Milwaukee, Turin and Singapore as three cases around the world where "creative city" policies were implemented. It illustrates not only the obvious differences but also the uncanny similarities that the three case studies share with one another. Furthermore, it aims to critically examine the complexities associated with applying

[109] Jeffrey Zimmerman, "From brew town to cool town: Neoliberalism and the creative city development strategy in Milwaukee," *Cities*, Vol. 25 (2008), p. 233.
[110] George Lightbourn and Stephen J. Agostini, "Why Building a "New" Milwaukee Matters to Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Policy Research Institute*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2004), p. 1.
[111] Lightbourn and Agostini, "Why Building a "New" Milwaukee Matters to Wisconsin," p. 7.

these "creative city" policies; thus demonstrating that the marriage of "creative city" ideas with municipal action was not as straightforward or seamless as Florida would claim them to be.

3.1. A Genuine American city turns cosmopolitan: Milwaukee's commitment to "creativity" in the early 2000s

Between 1995 and 2005 Milwaukee's official promotional logo was an industrial, round, gear-like symbol underscored with the slogan "Milwaukee: The Genuine American City" (Figure 1). Ad copy connected with the Genuine American campaign described the city's industrial and working-class heritage, complete with solid architecture, friendly and upright citizens, and family-oriented tourist attractions.[112] Yet in early 2001, civic leaders deemed it necessary to come up with an alternative, more forward thinking, and "hip" narrative about the city. The catalyst for this re-thinking was a series of visits made by Florida at the request of the city's most influential business coalition at that time, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC). According to Florida, Milwaukee already had all of the essential ingredients to become a leading center of the "new creativity-driven economy", but local boosters needed to focus on effectively spreading the word that the city was a diverse, tolerant, and "cool" place where "you can go sailing, hang out in a coffeehouse, and live in a renovated loft of an old warehouse."[113] He concluded by offering the following practical advice: highlight the city's "coolness" factor by promoting "the fact that the Violent Femmes, one of the best rock bands ever, are from Milwaukee,"[114] to the somewhat puzzled crowd. In doing so, Milwaukee could then follow the trail blazed by Austin, a fast-growing city where robust economic development was the product of, in Florida's conceptualization, the city's association with a "hip" music scene.[115]

Florida's suggestions were taken up through a series of representational and developmental strategies for Milwaukee proposed by local promoters such as the Spirit of Milwaukee (SOM) – an alliance of downtown interest groups. Their research showed that Americans primarily associated Milwaukee with "beer" and "cold". Hence, SOM focused their efforts around

[112] Judith D. Kenny and Jeffrey Zimmerman, "Constructing the 'Genuine American City': neo-liberalism, neo-traditionalism, Neo-urbanism and neo-liberalism in the remaking of downtown Milwaukee," *Cultural Geographies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2004), p. 77.
[113] Zimmerman, "From brew town to cool town," p. 234.
[114] Zimmerman, "From brew town to cool town," p. 234.
[115] Florida, *The rise of the creative class*, p. 300.

completely getting rid of the aforementioned Genuine American logo, replacing it what they called the "New Milwaukee". SOM decided early on that spectacular visual images would produce the strongest identities of place, like the Sydney Opera House for example. Milwaukee's new logo was to follow in this vein, but was also expected to articulate, as the president of SOM put it, "a new representation of Milwaukee – moving towards cool without screaming cool."[116] Inspired specifically by the success of Bilbao, Spain, SOM decided that the most appropriate symbolic fit was found in the Calatrava-designed addition to the Milwaukee Art Museum. Considered as a cutting-edge design project, the 2002 Calatrava addition attracted international visibility and praise. Stylistically, it aligned with the main motifs SOM desired to convey about the 'New Milwaukee', including a public lakefront property, a cosmopolitan arts scene, an innovative culture, a vibrant downtown, and youthful openness to "creative" outsiders. The new logo – a stylized version of the Calatrava addition, underscored by the slogan "Visit Milwaukee" (Figure 3) – was launched in early 2005 with massive publicity that included projecting the new icon on downtown buildings.[117] Within a matter of days, the local media gave its approval. Various public and private institutions in the city agreed to incorporate the logo into their own marketing imagery, including the City of Milwaukee and the Visitor's Bureau, which until that point had remained steadfastly committed to the Genuine American package.

Figure 1 "Milwaukee – Genuine American" logo in 1995.
Figure 2 The "new Milwaukee" logo in 2005. (Credit: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel files, https://archive.jsonline.com/greensheet/past-milwaukee-slogans-touted-city-as-a-bright-spot-and-genuine-american-b99647934z1-364798741.html)

[116] Zimmerman, "From brew town to cool town," p. 234.
[117] Lightbourn and Agostini, "Why Building a "New" Milwaukee Matters to Wisconsin," p. 8.

The Calatrava addition (Figure 3), which cost $122 million to build not only became the cultural centerpiece of Milwaukee's image regeneration campaign, but it also represented a classic example of the "speculative development of place" associated with the entrepreneurial city, as coined by renowned British economic geographer David Harvey.[118] According to Harvey, speculative place-development consists of a "starchitect's' buildings" that raise a city's profile on the international stage, generates positive press, increases tourism, and also plays an key role in producing a high-rise residential real-estate boom in the neighboring areas, enriching land owners considerably.[119] In Milwaukee, the building also symbolized the reorientation of Milwaukee's municipal leaders towards satisfying the lifestyle needs of the "creative class". Such infrastructural improvements effectively led to the recapitalization of select downtown neighborhoods as between 1998 and 2002, developers added an average of "500 housing units per year to Milwaukee's central area, while a total of roughly 3,000 new residential units were constructed in just the central business district alone, converting a formerly mono-functional zone into a mixed-use neighborhood in its own right. Property prices shot up by 54% during the same period, especially adjacent to the then newly constructed Riverwalk."[120] Furthermore, Florida's visits to Milwaukee also led municipal actors to create the "live, work, play" plan. The plan's primary goal took

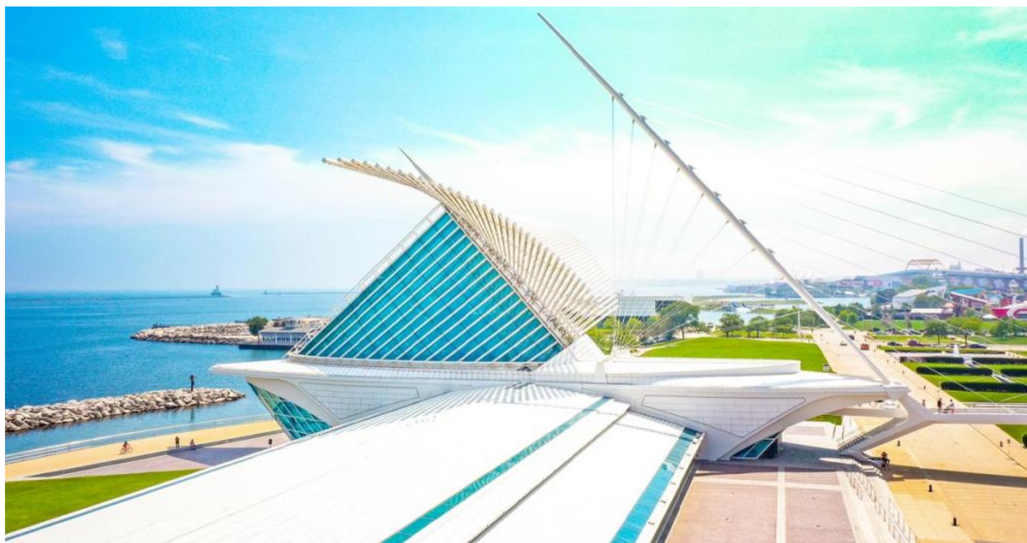

Figure 3 The Calatrava addition to the Milwaukee Art Museum (Credit: Milwaukee Art Museum, https://mam.org)

[118] David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (1989), p. 4.
[119] Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism," p. 4.
[120] Judith D. Kenny, "Making Milwaukee Famous: Cultural Capital, Urban Image, and the Politics of Place," *Urban Geography*, Vol. 16, No. 5 (1995), p. 448.

directly from Florida's works and outlined ways to increase the density of "live, work, play" opportunities, and to convince certain companies in Milwaukee's manufacturing sector to "re-brand" themselves and re-surface as technology companies, which would allow the city to reposition its economic image towards a more "creativity driven economy".[121] And as we pointed out earlier, live, work, play stressed that for Milwaukee to compete with its peer cities and attract young professionals would require a more thorough integration of the new Milwaukee logo into the city's architectural landscape. The plan therefore worked towards appropriate signage at the airport, and along freeways and city streets. Meanwhile, branding strategies for smaller-scale areas, such as revitalizing neighborhoods and emerging retail strips were marked by kiosks and "bright, colorful, and fun signs".

Despite the continued local and national popularity of Florida's ideas, the extent to which his theories are empirically grounded and predicative of economic growth has remained a point of contention. Stephen Rausch and Cynthia Negrey in fact suggest in their article that there is essentially no causal relationship between a city's "creative class" concentration and economic growth.[122] And the same would certainly hold true for metropolitan Milwaukee as well. Between 1999 and 2003, "almost 50,000 jobs were lost, and within multiple sectors of the economy ranging from manufacturing (-29,953) to wholesale and retail trade (-10,020), information technology (-1,265) and administrative services (-5,326)."[123] Moreover, these numbers masked the highly uneven socio-demographic pattern of this economic decline as close to 60% of working age African-American males in Milwaukee's metropolitan area were jobless in the years between 2002 and 2004.[124] Hence, it is within this context then that Milwaukee's embrace of the "creative city" development strategy becomes even more noticeable – the transformation of the local state towards supporting a much more active pro-gentrification approach. In the four fiscal years that followed 2001, Milwaukee's economic development portfolio totaled "$413 million. More than 71% of this were invested in real estate and physical improvements, a sum that exceed by far this kind of

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[121] Kenny, "Making Milwaukee Famous," p. 450.
[122] Stephen Rausch and Cynthia Negrey, "Does the creative engine run? A Consideration of the Effect of Creative Class on Economic Strength and Growth," *Journal of Urban* Affairs, Vol. 28, No. 5 (2006), p. 475.
[123] Sammis B. White, "Jobs in The New Millennium: Wisconsin's Regional Economies 1999-2003," *Wisconsin Policy Research Institute*, Vol, 17, No. 4 (2004), p. 9.
[124] Marc V. Levine, "Perspectives on the Current State of the Milwaukee Economy," *Center of Economic Development Publications* (2013), p. 11.

spending in Milwaukee's peer cities at that time."[125] Projects funded with this public money included the construction of downtown amenities such as the expansion of the Riverwalk, large retail developments, an upscale downtown office and condominium tower, a new downtown museum, as well as façade and streetscape improvements, almost exclusively in the central area neighborhoods potentially attractive to the "creative class". "A mere 1% of this portfolio was invested in workforce development and training and just 22% was used to attract, retain or expand jobs within the city."[126]

Unfortunately, local elites either ignored or were unable to fully grasp this grim economic reality. Nor did it affect in any substantial way Florida's celebrity status amongst the city's media or policy makers. If anything, the attractiveness of the "creativity" concept seemed to increase in proportion to Milwaukee's economic decline. The local business press became even more aggressive in promoting Florida's agenda, and this was especially the case on the rare occasion when the property-led downtown development "paradigm" was temporarily challenged. For instance, in the summer of 2004, the Common Council rejected a $41 million public subsidy to redevelop the defunct Pabst Brewery complex into a new downtown neighborhood including a condominium and upscale entertainment arenas. To this, local policymakers instead blamed the city's ingrained culture of retrograde working-class conservatism:

> Do enough people understand that Milwaukee will have to shed its working class heritage if it is to join the ranks of America's great cities? The City Council vote to reject the PabstCity project suggests there is still much work to be done on this front. It was instructive to learn how relatively easy it was to kill the project. Defending the status quo will always be easier than championing for change.[127]

Milwaukee thus in many ways represents a classic case study of how "creative" neoliberal urban policies unfold in an American city. Enamored by Richard Florida's theory about the relationship between the "creative class" and sustainable economic growth, image-makers and municipal actors alike orchestrated a comprehensive strategy that explicitly followed the details of his idealized "creative city" model. Yet, consistent with Jamie Peck's contentions, the "creative city" development strategy in Milwaukee was rooted in gentrification, creating socio-spatial inequality

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[125] Levine, "Perspectives on the Current State of the Milwaukee Economy," p. 13.
[126] Lightbourn and Agostini, "Why Building a "New" Milwaukee Matters to Wisconsin," p. 10.
[127] Lightbourn and Agostini, "Why Building a "New" Milwaukee Matters to Wisconsin," p. 10.

and displacing hundreds of centrally located manufacturing jobs. And though the marriage of Florida's ideas with municipal action supported a renewed resurgence in the downtown area, it failed to tackle the economic malaise that pervaded the remainder of the city. It therefore ultimately brought into even sharper focus what was already and continuous to be one of the most economically and racially polarizing cities in the United States.

3.2. A Company Town Reinvented as a "creative city": The case of Turin

"Torino, always on the move."[128]

In many ways, the history of urban branding in Turin can be read as a history of the progressive emancipation from Fiat, the largest automobile manufacturer in Italy. As one of the central urban nodes of Italy's economy "in 2007, 8.4% of the national income was produced in the Piedmont region,"[129] it is also home to Fiat's headquarters and is considered Italy's capital of the automobile industry. The footprints of Fiat on the city grew particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, due to massive immigration of workers from different parts of the country. Two landmarks testify to this industrial image. The first was Lingotto, Fiat's main factory from 1922 to 1982. It was a large complex inspired by Detroit's Ford factory, later converted to service several functions (offices, hotels, shopping malls and a multiplex cinema), and often shown in promotional brochures to indicate Turin's transition from industrialism to a more service-based economy. The second one was Mirafiori, an immense productive area of about 1 million square meters opened in 1936. And to emphasize just how dominant a role Fiat played in Turin's economic life – statistics estimate that "in 2003, in 24% of families in the city, at least one person worked for the company."[130] It is not surprising then that the image of Turin is closely tied to industry; it is part of the city's identity. However, like in many other one company towns in and outside of Europe, the general crisis of the Fordist factory from the late 1970s was dramatic. A particularly symbolic moment in the case of Turin was the so-called "march of the 40,000", in 1980, when working-class and white-collar laborers both protested together in a massive strike against the layoff of 23,000 workers (for a

[128] James Owen, "From "Turin" to "Torino": Olympics Put New Name On The Map," 2006, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/turin-torino-italy-olympics (Accessed 01 April 2022).
[129] Vanolo, "The image of the creative city," p. 373.
[130] Vanolo, "The image of the creative city," p. 373.

temporary period of three years).[131] The demonstration did not succeed (the workers were effectively dismissed), but it would scar the social fabric of the city, and provoked a debate about its future, one that had to consider development directions away from Fiat and towards the promotion of non-industrial activities. In effect, Turin would follow a similar path to Milwaukee.

Concerning the issue of urban branding then, it is necessary to emphasize that the promotion of the image of Turin emerged during the late 1980s and early 1990s, just as the "creative city" movement was beginning to take shape. The initial images of the city though were not promoted by the municipality but by important local cultural institutions of the time, among them the Fondazione Agnelli, founded by the family that had established Fiat, Ires Piemonte, and Fondazione San Paolo. Among these images were MITO (an idea of strong functional integration with Milan along a 130 km axis), GEMITO (the same, but including Genoa), Mechatronic land (a region for mechanic and electronic expertise – and not just automobile productions), and Turin Technocity (stressing ideas of ICT, as in many other European cities in the 1990s).[132] Two aspects of these branding exercises should be noted. The first is that their informal nature. They were developed voluntarily by independent local cultural institutions, without municipality support. Consequently, they lacked any sort of legitimization, stressing the problem of the "authorization of a particular image".[133] Secondly, these attempts shared a common vision of promoting something different from Fiat. During the 1980s, MITO, GEMITO, Mechatronic land, etc. emphasized other manufacturing vocations for the city, particularly after the industrial crisis of 1996, which led to growing skepticism surrounding the manufacturing identity of the city.[134] And so it was within this context, from the late 1990s onwards that the urban branding of Turin took a fresh impetus with the creation of public-private institutions.

For example, Invest in Turin and Piedmont (ITP), a regional agency, was founded in 1997, in order to attract investments and help external enterprises locate in the region. In 2006, it was reorganized and merged its activities with those of the Regional Institute for Agricultural Food Marketing (IMA) and was renamed Piemonte Agency for Investments, Export and Tourism.

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[131] Gilles Pinson, "Political Government and Governance: Strategic Planning and the Reshaping of Political Capacity in Turin," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2002), p. 482.
[132] Pinson, "Political Government and Governance," p. 482.
[133] Yeong-Hyun Kim and John Rennie Short, *Cities and Economies* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 94.
[134] Vanolo, "The image of the creative city," p. 374.

Likewise, three local tourism agencies (named ATL 1, 2 and 3), each one specializing in the promotion of a certain part of the territory of the Province of Turin were also created in 1997. Since 2006, these three agencies were merged to become Turismo Torino e Provincia.[135] But, perhaps more importantly, it was the approval of Turin's first strategic plan in 2000, called Torino Internazionale, that marked a dramatic shift in the city's urban branding policy. Created by an association that originally included sixty partners (growing to 120 in 2008); the plan's main objective (as testified by its name) was to promote internationalization by requiring local actors to collectively build and develop strategies and images that would reflect economic diversification. This direction was further confirmed in the second edition of the plan, published in 2006, where it stated a shared future vision of becoming "a knowledge society".[136] The Winter Olympic Games, held the same year in Turin, presented the perfect opportunity to implement this image-building exercise.

Case in point being the choice to refer to the city, not as Turin, but as Torino, irrespective of the language, and associating it with the slogan "always on the move" to emphasize that something was changing. This message (along with "passion lives here" and "Torino is more and more beautiful"), was widely promoted by the media right before the Olympic Games, with the installation of more than 7,000 banners and posters and 3,000 flags throughout the city (Figure 4).[137] In terms of visitors, the city hosted about 1.1 million tourists in 2006, and would also host various high profile events in the future such as the 2006 World Fencing Championships, the 2007 Chess Olympics, and particularly the 2008 World Design Capital, which shaped a new visual identity for the city.[138] In addition, the image-building was further supported by the construction of new landmark structures designed by prestigious international architects like the Atrium, by Giugiaro Architettura (Figure 5), the installation of artistic elements in different parts of the city (for example, luci-d'artista – light sculptures, light games, illumination systems designed by artists, and the organization of events (exhibitions, conferences, workshops, during the 2008 World Design Capital). All these initiatives not only nurtured the "cultural" dimension but also attracted

[135] Pinson, "Political Government and Governance," p. 483.
[136] James Kneale and Claire Dwyer, "Consumption," in *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, ed. by James. S. Duncan, Nuala C. Johnson, and Richard H. Schien (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 300.
[137] Owen, "From "Turin" to "Torino": Olympics Put New Name On The Map."
[138] "World Design Capital Torino 2008," 2008, https://wdo.org/programmes/wdc/past-cities/wdctorino2008/ (Accessed 01 April 2022).

a new "buzz" to the city, particularly in and around these and other landmark areas like the Murazzi waterfront area on the Po River (with a number of night clubs) and the Quadrilatero, the central area which became gentrified by "creatives" (specially by artists and musicians). Such spaces then assumed an important symbolic role in the celebration of the idea of a "creative city", and in the process, steering away from the prevailing industry-driven image of the city.

Figure 4 "Passion lives here" promotional banner, Turin, 2006. (Credit: Claudio Pallard, https://www.flickr.com/photos/70871201@N00/3172811785/in/album-72157612181519647/)

Turin, like Milwaukee to a certain degree, highlights the urgent attempts made by local policy makers in promoting a "new" image for the city; one centered around "creative" post-Fordist forms of consumption. However, this particular manifestation of urban "creativity" was not that revolutionary; rather, as Peck points out, it involves a "cheap" group of heterogeneous actions (from the organization of public events to supporting the local art scene as seen earlier) that can easily create a public consensus (who would oppose a cultural festival or a designated lane for cyclists?) even in the face of possible negative feedback and outcomes that are difficult to

quantify.[139] Both Turin and Milwaukee invested heavily in cultural industries and cultural images, represented through slogans and stereotyped images that celebrated the "buzz" of public spaces, crowded squares, and high-profile cultural events as the basis of attracting the "creative class". Little to no attention was given to the importance of diversity, tolerance, multi-culturalism, and education – all part of the "human capital" element of "creativity" proposed as central to economic

Figure 5 Atrium, Turin, 2006. (Credit: Giugiaro Architeturra, http://www.giugiaroarchitettura.it/projects/atrium-torino/)

growth by Florida. Naturally then, this orientation produced an elitist vision of the "creative class". With respect to Turin however, it is interesting to note that the 2006 Winter Olympics was in fact backed by Gianni Agnelli himself, the former president of Fiat. He used his international influence to win over the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in favor of the Piedmont city.[140] And it is worth reiterating again that Fiat had for the longest time shaped politics in Turin and the region of Piedmont as a whole. So, it was hardly surprising that Fiat had people it could trust sitting on the TOROC Organizing Committee and at the Turin 2006 Agency. In terms of cost, the application

[139] Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," p. 763.
[140] Francesco Pastorelli, "Turin Winter Olympics 2006," 2014, https://www.cipra.org/en/dossiers/the-winter-olympics/field-reports-1/turin-winter-olympics-2006 (Accessed 01 April 2022).

dossier submitted in 1998 had budgeted for an initial estimate of around 500 million euros. But this would rise by a further 3 billion euros – 1.4 billion from the Italian government, 200 million from the municipality of Turin, 300 million from private individuals, 159 million from other bodies and authorities, and some more public funds to plug the deficit. Against these losses stood an income of just under 1 billion euros from TV rights, sponsorship, ticket sales, etc., resulting in a total loss of 2.5 billion euros.[141] What this suggests is despite Turin's efforts at a progressive, formal emancipation from Fiat and from a Fordist industrial vision, the influence of Fiat remained deeply embedded within the cultural and political fabric of the city. A strong underlying Fordist identity persisted in the promotion of what was seemingly, a "new", "creative" vision for the city.

3.3. Establishing the "creative city" in an authoritarian city-state: The case of Singapore

"We can't get arts development in Singapore without the role of Government" – (Actor, F 2014).

"And (Richard Florida) was required reading for our Civil Service. It was shocking" – (Satirical blogger, m, 40s, 2013).[142]

Asian cities – long under-represented in mainstream urban planning theory – have within the last two decades or so started to gain gained more prominence as case studies. As Kris Olds and Henry Yeung state in their article, Singapore, in particular, has become increasingly influential, and visible in global policy circuits, seen not just as a policy recipient but also a policy generator.[143] It along with other hyper-developmental "Tiger" cities (such as Hong Kong, Seoul, Taipei, Beijing, and Shanghai), has become receptive to the idea of investing in arts and culture as an economic, social and political policy approach. Several authors (such as Belinda Yuen who we mentioned earlier, Lily Kong, Justin O'Connor, and T.C. Chang among others) have explored, and critiqued, the ways in which the "creative city" concept has moved beyond the West and become embedded in the Asian City. However, these policies reach places in different forms, at different times, and via different conduits. Indeed, some of these policies emerged from within a localized Asian context, forming hybrids with incoming global policies (and in turn, helping to transform those policies). It is this aspect that is less explored – the localisms that render the "Asian creative city"

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[141] Pastorelli, "Turin Winter Olympics 2006."
[142] Jason D. Luger, "When the creative class *strikes* back: State-led creativity and its discontents," *Geoforum*, Vol. 106 (2019), p. 333.
[143] Kris Olds and Henry Yeung, "Pathways to global city formation: a view from the developmental city-state of Singapore," *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2004), p. 492.

contextually singular rather than simply a recipient of global patterns and trends. The "Asian creative city" thus produces unique landscapes and locally-embedded geographies, deeply rooted in longstanding Asian traditions and cultural themes.

When an "illiberal" state is the driving force behind "creative" urban strategies, what are the socio-cultural impacts? Singapore presents a particularly compelling and complex case of authoritarian urbanism due to its small geographical size, high-level of state control, strong links with the West, and uniquely entrepreneurial, liberal economic policies, which facilitate an exchange of ideas, capital, and migrants. Gavin Shatkin, currently Associate Professor at the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs at Northeastern University, in his article explores how Singapore's specific style of state-capitalism, which operates through state-ownership of land and state-owned corporations, mainly Temasek Holdings, is different than larger state-capitalist models such as Hong Kong or (the much larger) South Korea. In Singapore, "the (state) has combined a commercial interest in property development and economic development, actualized through its central role in property markets and the corporate economy, with an interest in maintaining political control through economic development and the hegemonic control of space."[144] Singapore therefore represents a distinct variation from current understandings of the socio-spatial dynamics of neoliberal urban politics with few if any parallels in the world. Within this state-capitalist model, "creativity" takes on a particular significance – and in Singapore, this means a decades-long policy and quest to transform into a "Global City for the Arts" and a "Renaissance City", a place where local, regional and international arts and culture are displayed and consumed, and a "cosmopolitan city plugged into the international network where the world's talents and ideas can converge and multiply."[145]

Outlining the history and evolution of "creative city" policy in Singapore, Urban Geographer and President of Singapore Management University Lily Kong argues that as early as the mid-1980s, Singaporean policy elites began to debate the need for Singapore to provide spaces of cultural consumption such as performance spaces, museums, and esplanades for visitors and residents, as Singapore had become a major international business center. In 1991, the then

[144] Gavin Shatkin, "Reinterpreting the meaning of the 'Singapore Model': State Capitalism and Urban Planning," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2014), p. 117.
[145] T.C. Chang, "Renaissance Revisited: Singapore as a 'Global City for the Arts,'" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (2000), p. 818.

Minister for the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Arts (MICA), now the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (MCCY), George Yeo, said that "to be competitive in the next phase of our national development, we need to promote the arts," and later reaffirmed in 1993, "Singapore has been an international market for rubber, spices oil, currency, gold and other things... but it is also hoped to be an international market for the arts."[146] Furthermore, Philip Yeo, the then chair of the Economic Development Board (EDB), unequivocally stated the importance of realizing the economic potential of the arts in 1992:

> There is now in Singapore a major opportunity to develop the arts, not only for cultural enrichment, but also in the interest of economic growth There will be significant spinoffs: generating revenue, providing employment for creative talents, attracting overseas business, developing tourism and providing a catalyst for urban renewal. Creativity from the arts sector will add to the cutting edge of the Singapore economy in the coming decade.[147]

Singapore's "creativity" turn would thus enter its second phase from 2000, coinciding with the works of Florida (*The Rise of the Creative Class*, 2002) and Charles Landry (*The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, 2008). The Renaissance City I plan by MICA in 2000 had a stated aim of turning Singapore into a "Global City for the Arts" (GCA), and subsequent reports included "Investing in Singapore's Cultural Capital" by the Ministry of Information and the Arts (MITA, 2002) and "Creative Industries Development Strategy" by the Economic Review Committee (ERC, 2002). Kong points out that it was in the ERC report where Florida was first mentioned in Singaporean policy, referring to his three-pronged notion of multidimensional "creativity" (innovation, entrepreneurship, and artistic and cultural "creativity"). This report states that "Singapore must embark on a journey of reinvention to look into how (we, as Singaporeans) can harness the multi-dimensional creativity of our people in order to establish a new competitive advantage."[148] Kong convincingly knows that Singaporean policy-makers in general cited Florida and Landry uncritically, only using a "surface application" of their ideas, and using "key theorists like Richard Florida as little more than expert citations."[149] Hence, engagement with their

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[146] Lily Kong, "Ambitions of a global city: arts, culture, and creative economy in 'post crisis' Singapore," *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2012), p. 280.
[147] Chang, "Renaissance Revisited," p. 823.
[148] Kong, "Ambitions of a global city," p. 282.
[149] Lily Kong, Chris Gibson, Louisa-May Khoo, and Anne-Louise Semple, "Knowledges of the creative economy: Towards a rational geography of diffusion and adaptation in Asia," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2006), p. 179.

discourses was not especially profound, as evinced through one of the two introductory quotes in this section (and something that will be revisited later).

As a result, investment from the state filtered down to many aspects of the "creative economy" and cultural landscape, such as the development of entertainment complexes intended to attract major international acts and compete with venues in other global cities for attention – the most notable example being the Esplanades Theaters on the Bay, which was inaugurated in 2002 and built at a cost of more than US $500 million.[150] The same is true for the development of Marina Bay Sands (Figure 6), a massive casino development in Singapore's downtown area. Designed by renowned architect Moshie Safdie, and built by the Las Vegas Sands Corporation, it officially opened in 2011. Its unique design – a 340m long, surfboard-shaped "Sky-Deck", cantilevered over three 57 storey structures made for a dramatic visual impact on visitors entering the downtown area from Changi International Airport.[151] The Marina Bay Sands development is emblematic of the lengths at which the government was willing to go to in creating new "creative" spaces. It had long forbidden gambling as a threat to moral order, a practice that was only changed after former Prime Minister and founding father of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, a longtime casino opponent, came to view the Marina Bay development as necessary in Singapore's efforts to shake off its "sterile" image and fully realize its potential as a tourism and "knowledge-driven" industrial center.

In addition to these flagship developments, cultural events such as the "Singapore Biennale" and the "Singapore International Festival of Arts" generated considerable international press. Creating these new spaces for entertainment brought a more-relaxed attitude to the night-time economy, including the promotion of drinking, dancing, and even allowing a cluster of gay bars and clubs in and around the downtown area. Singapore, in other words, sought to become "fun". Moreover, state officials also tried to make the urban environment more "interesting" and "culturally rich". "Heritage districts" such as Chinatown, the Rochor "Arts District", Little India and the suburban Wessex Estate, Gillman Barracks and Dempsey (old British army barracks and

[150] Brenda S.A. Yeoh, "The Global Cultural City? Spatial Imagineering and Politics in (Multi)cultural Marketplaces of South-east Asia," *Urban Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 5-6 (2005), p. 950.
[151] Shatkin, "Reinterpreting the meaning of the 'Singapore Model,"' p. 131.

bungalows) have all been spared the bulldozer, serving as little pockets of cultural tourism and authenticity in what T.C. Chang in his article calls the "experiential economy".[152]

Figure 6 Marina Bay Sands (Credit: Photo by the author, 2011)

The Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) Report of 2012 setting out the next phase for Singapore's "creative" and cultural transformation called for bringing arts to the people – "away from the cloisters of the elite theater or bohemian enclave, to inculcate arts, everywhere, for everyone, everyday."[153] But how did the city leaders hope to achieve this? How was art-making going to be encouraged while the limits of authoritarian restrictions and censorship were still maintained, prohibiting the exploration of overtly anti-government themes that threatened racial, ethnic or religious harmony or even promoted homosexuality. Jason D. Luger, Lecturer in City and Regional Planning at the College of Environmental Design at the University of California,

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[152] T.C Chang "New uses need old buildings: Gentrification aesthetics and the arts in Singapore," *Urban Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (2016), p. 528.

[153] "Arts and Culture Strategic Review (2012)," 2012, https://www.nac.gov.sg/docs/default-source/resources-files/arts-masterplan/arts-and-culture-strategic-review-(2012)/the-report-of-the-arts-and-culture-strategic-review.pdf?sfvrsn=b64d33c4_2, p. 8 (Accessed 17 April 2022).

Berkley, in his eye-opening article on "creative resistance" in Singapore, conducted several interviews with both policy makers and cultural producers from 2012 to 2014. The general sentiment he encountered amongst the "arts generation" when prompted to reflect critically on Singapore's cultural evolution was that "somehow the city-state had gotten it 'wrong' and had not gone nearly far enough in rolling out cultural policy; that these policies were at best, gestural and half-hearted; and at worst; simply a neoliberal iteration of elite-authoritarian economically-driven policymaking."[154] As one satirical blogger explained to him:

> It (the idea of the 'Renaissance City') comes across as rather pretentious. I think you don't make yourself a Renaissance City by dictum – that seems to be what the State is doing – I don't think it is a term that resonates with a lot of Singaporeans, um. In any case, I am not sure that the elements that made the Renaissance – as we understand it today the historical Renaissance of centuries ago – I don't think the elements are in place. So my immediate reaction to it is that, this is a hollow – it has no resonance with the people of Singapore, and objectively, there is no parallel.[155]

Similarly, Janice Koh, an actress, and former Nominated MP for the Arts, in an impassioned speech to the parliament in March 2014 implied that much of Singapore's "creative" turn had been window-dressing and that the arts had not been fully prioritized:

> Have we sufficiently set creativity as a national priority? Are we investing in an education system that nurtures creativity to future-proof our school-children? Are we embracing creativity as a key strategy to build resilience in our economy?[156]

Arts practitioners were already expressing similar concerns to Koh's back when The Esplanade was announced. Back then, they highlighted its mega-structures and high rentals would be amenable mainly to blockbuster events such as foreign pop concerts and Broadway shows, and less accommodating towards smaller, local, experimental and non-profit productions. The Esplanade was viewed as a mega-structure conjuring images of "high modernity, mega-development, twenty-first century urbanity and progressive urban futures but yielding relatively meagre benefits to local practitioners on the arts scene."[157] Ever since independence, the government's emphasis on mega-structures can be attributed to its economistic mindset towards urban development. And right from the outset, the same approach was adopted in Singapore's

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[154] Luger, "When the creative class *strikes* back," p. 336.
[155] Luger, "When the creative class *strikes* back," p. 336.
[156] Luger, "When the creative class *strikes* back," p. 336.
[157] Brenda S.A. Yeoh, "Global/globalizing cities," *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1999), p. 610.

GCA vision. As T. Sasitharan, the then artistic director of The Substation, Singapore's first independent contemporary arts center, observed:

> In Singapore, we are attempting to put the cart before the horse. I think, as always, Singapore's economic development has been premised on providing the infrastructure and the software will catch up with the available infrastructure… but in arts development, it doesn't work that way. I think what is important in the arts, of course, is not the hardware but the education, the training, the support of the software, the people. The support of the people-ware. That has to precede the development of the hardware.[158]

According to Edwin Tong, the current Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law, as of May 2021, the Singapore government provides S$450 million in annual funding to the arts, about a third of which goes to the National Arts Council (NAC).[159] Two years prior, in April 2019, Las Vegas Sands (LVS), the parent company of Marina Bay Sands (MBS), confirmed that they would spend an approximate S$4.5 billion on building a fourth stand-alone tower. The new tower would feature around 1,000 luxury suite hotel rooms, and form part of a wider S$9 billion expansion plan.[160] The importance of "harnessing the multi-dimensional creativity of the people" as claimed by Florida still does not appear to be particularly high on the government's agenda. Singapore's elevation of the arts and culture as a primary policy objective creates an explicit contradiction between the city-state's efforts to use its control of urban space to nurture compliant national citizens on the one hand, and its desire to create the sense of "coolness" and diversity that it believes is necessary to create a "knowledge-driven economy" on the other hand. This has opened spaces for contention and resistance by an emboldened, and ever-so growing number of cultural producers, of which the "arts generation" sits front and center. Paradoxically, though this "arts generation" has been given the tools to push back against the more "illiberal" aspects of the state-led "creative-cultural" agenda; at the same time, it has been prevented from realizing its full radical potential by authoritarian confines. Thus, in giving birth to the "arts generation", Singapore's government and policy-elite might have opened pandora's box; something with unintended consequences and something that perhaps can no longer be fully

[158] Chang, "Renaissance Revisited," p. 825.
[159] "Government's funding for the arts sector and the sector's contribution to GDP and job creation," 2021, https://www.mccy.gov.sg/about-us/news-and-resources/parliamentary-matters/2021/may/government-funding-for-the-arts-sector (Accessed 17 April 2022).
[160] Tiffany Fumiko Tay, "Marina Bay Sands: Stand-alone hotel tower, 15,000-seat concert arena to be built," 2019, https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/standalone-hotel-tower-15000-seat-concert-arena-to-be-built (Accessed 17 April 2022).

controlled. If maintaining social order and achieving economic growth are the two over-arching goals of the government (as has been the case since independence), then it remains to be seen how the government decides to deal with the arts if they destabilize, rather than stabilize the socio-cultural fabric of Singaporean society.

On the one hand, the cases of Milwaukee, Turin, and Singapore demonstrate the extent to which the "creativity" debate has gained traction, and in particular, the popularity and far-reaching influence scholars/authors like Florida had on influencing urban policy-makers worldwide. These cities invested heavily in cultural industries and cultural images with "creativity" serving as the umbrella concept. Though hardly revolutionary, the urban milieu, the images of crowded public spaces, large cultural events, and mega-structures, in many ways formed (and perhaps still does form) the basis of the attractiveness of cities not just in the eyes of the "creative class" but also to the majority of us. On the other hand, not every city displays ideas of "creativity" using the same set of stereotypes. Each of these cases were distinct in their embodiment and consequent application, implementation, and expression of "creative" neoliberal urban policies, thus bringing to the surface the underlying challenges and tensions when combining Florida's ideas with local action. As a city experiencing economic distress in the early 2000s, Milwaukee's embrace of the "creative city" development strategy, whilst celebrated in the downtown area, saw the transformation of the local state towards supporting a much more active pro-gentrification approach, and in turn, deepened socio-spatial inequalities in the greater Milwaukee area. In Turin, we witnessed the challenge it faced in shaking off its industrial image and long history and association with Fiat, despite attempts to do the exact opposite. And finally, Singapore represented the complexity of promoting "creativity" in an "illiberal" state that in the process, gave birth to an uneasy relationship between "creative resistance" and state-control. Based on these three cases, it might be prudent to ask whether the "creative class" can simply be considered as something to attract primarily because of its potential to consume, rather than for its intrinsic "creative" potential and its capability to improve the quality of a location, as stressed by Florida.

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Conclusion

In her seminal work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jane Jacobs quipped that "being human is itself difficult, and therefore all kinds of settlements (except dream cities) have problems. Cities have difficulties in abundance because they have people in abundance."[161] However she hastened to add that cities are not helpless. They have the innate ability to understand, communicate, invent, and overcome even the most difficult of problems. She mentions as a striking example of this ability is the effect that cities have had on disease. Cities have always been breeding grounds for disease – think back to the Black Death, the Spanish flu, or most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the huge suffering and loss of lives, overtime, cities would eventually become great disease conquerors. All the advancements in apparatus of surgery, hygiene, microbiology, chemistry, telecommunications, public health measures, teaching and research hospitals, ambulances and the like, which people not only in cities but also outside them rely upon, are fundamentally products of cities and would be inconceivable without cities.[162] The surplus wealth, the productivity, the diversity of talents that allow society to support advances such as these are themselves products of our organization into cities. They give rise to the clustering, density, and interaction that generate economic growth. Cities thus contain the seeds of their own regeneration.

The new post-Fordist economy has ushered in varied and far-reaching possibilities for "creative" forms of production and work, where cities, through strenuous efforts and at tremendous costs, have endeavored to enhance the "creative" environment by transforming the social and physical fabric of society. Indeed, over the course of the history of capitalist urbanization, we have witnessed several pregnant opportunities in an attempt to harmonize economy, culture, and place. The notion of the "city of the spectacle" put forth by Guy Debord (1967) where the spectacle is not just a collection of images, but a social relation between people that is mediated by images can perhaps be seen as an early foreshadowing of some of these developments, especially in the matter of the new production spaces, cultural complexes, and dramatic visual structures that are proliferating in major cities around the world (as we saw in the previous chapter). "The spectacle hence represents more than just a mere visual deception produced by mass-media technologies. It

[161] Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p. 447.
[162] Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p. 448.

is in fact, a worldview that has actually been materialised. Its totality is both the result and the goal of the dominant mode of production. It is not a mere decoration added to the real world."[163]

At the same time, it is appropriate to recall, and once again reiterate the evolution of urban planning from the "big man/genius planner" i.e., Howard's and Le Corbusier's "Garden City/Radiant Garden City" to urban planning moving towards the "creative city" concept – a social, cultural, and political activity, where ideas are constantly negotiated and bound to be compromised as they are taken up by stakeholders with diverging interests. This is not to downplay the role of authors such as Charles Landry and in particular, Richard Florida, in giving emphasis to promoting the "creative city" concept. Right from the outset, this thesis has also suggested in viewing them not just as mere sources, but as key historical actors with agency, as facilitators, in the worldwide development and proliferation of the "creative city" concept. Their influence was indeed crucial not just in terms of affecting contemporary urban policy but also in terms of the attention they receive in secondary literature, across different academic disciplines; where they continue to be analyzed and critiqued by fellow scholars/authors. Though, as we have witnessed with the cases of Milwaukee, Turin, and Singapore respectively, each of them adopted and expressed the "creative city" concept in distinct ways due to the competing interests of the various stakeholders that were in play at the local level. Therefore, Florida's unwavering optimism provides at best a rather one-sided view of actual trends and latent possibilities in urban development patterns. Cities today may well harbor unprecedented, hitherto untapped "creative" capabilities, but they are also places where striking social, cultural, and economic inequalities prevail. This is not simply a question of income distribution, but a question of the meaning of "creativity" itself. Can "creativity" simply be imported into cities on the back of the "creative class"? Can "creativity" be organically developed through the complex interweaving of relations of production, work, and social life in specific urban contexts? If so, how? And ultimately, to what end?

It is interesting to note how Landry himself has acknowledged that the "creative city" concept has become a catch all phrase, in danger of losing its purpose, and in his words, "obliterating the reasons why the idea emerged in the first place which was essentially about

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[163] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. by Ken Knabb (London: Algate Press, 2004), p. 8.

unleashing, harnessing, empowering potential from whatever source."[164] He adds that "creativity is like a rash. Everyone is in the creativity game,"[165] and thus for him, cities have increasingly tended to restrict its meaning to the arts and activities within the "creative economy" professions calling any cultural plan a "creative city" plan when this represents only an aspect of a community's "creativity". As a result, overuse, hype and the tendency for cities to adopt the term without thinking through its real consequences has in a way rendered it a hollow concept, "chewed up and thrown out until the next big slogan comes along."[166] Perhaps then, it would be best to conclude this thesis by once again asking ourselves the same question that Florida posed in *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), some 20 years later – What do we *really* want? What kind of life and what kind of society do we want to bequeath to the coming generations?

[164] Landry, *The Creative City*, p. 269.
[165] Landry, "The Creative City: The Story of a Concept," p. 8.
[166] Landry, *The Creative City*, p. 269.

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